

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

Central Committee

Minutes of the Forty-Seventh Meeting

Geneva, Switzerland

12 - 20 September 1996





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of the World Council of Churches**

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World Council of Churches

150, route de Ferney

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LIST OF CONTENTS

OPENING ACTIONS

I	Worship	1
II	Call to Order	1
III	Roll Call and Seating of Substitutes	1
IV	In Memoriam	2
V	Agenda and Timetable	3
VI	Minutes of Previous Meeting	3
VII	Appointment of Committees	3
VIII	New Members of Central Committee	3
IX	Applications for Membership	4
X	Public Issues	4
XI	Stewards	5

REPORTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND THE MODERATOR

I	Report of the General Secretary; Discussion	5
II	Report of the Moderator; Discussion	18
III	Response by the Central Committee	27

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

MODERATOR	29
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PUBLIC ISSUES 34

I	Statement on Burundi	37
II	Statement on the Intensified US Sanctions against Cuba and their Assertion of Extra-Territoriality	39
III	Minute on US Attacks on Iraq	40
IV	Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs	41

DELIBERATIVE SESSIONS

I	Ecclesiology and Ethics	44
II	HIV/AIDS	47

TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND VISION OF THE WCC

- I Presentation of CUV Document and Discussion 51
- II Action by the Central Committee 60

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

- I Deliberative Session on Report of
Assembly Planning Committee (APC) 63
- II Report of the Assembly Planning Committee 69
- III Action by the Central Committee 80

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

- Committee on the General Secretariat 82
- Committee on Unit I: Unity and Renewal 89
- Committee on Unit II: Churches in Mission: Health,
Education and Witness 98
- Committee on Unit III: Justice, Peace and Creation 104
- Committee on Unit IV: Sharing and Service 114
- Finance Committee 122

STAFFING REPORT

- I Staffing: Appointments, Contract Extensions,
Information 132
- II Re-election of the General Secretary 139

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 141

CLOSING ACTIONS 141

APPENDICES

I	Attendance: List of Participants	143
II	Membership of Unit Committees, the Committee on the General Secretariat, the Committee on Public Issues, and the Finance Committee	154
III	The Impact of HIV/AIDS and the Churches' Response: A Statement proposed for adoption by the Central Committee on the basis of the WCC Consultative Group on AIDS Study Process	161
IV	Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs	174
V	The Meaning of Membership (revised text)	184
VI	Eighth Assembly: Memorandum of Understanding between the WCC and the Government of Zimbabwe	188
VII	Investment Policy Guidelines	191
VIII	Revised Budgets: 1997 Budget: General; Activities; Units Eighth Assembly - Fifth Draft Budget	194 202
IX	List of Documents Available on Request	204

OPENING ACTIONS

I. Worship

Daily morning worship took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Centre, under the overall theme "Called to One Hope". On Sunday 15 September, participants were invited to attend worship with local congregations in the Geneva area.

At the Opening Worship on the morning of 12 September, Dr Marion Best preached on the text "You will be my witnesses".

II. Call to Order

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, called to order the forty-seventh meeting of the Central Committee at 9.15 on Thursday, 12 September 1996. After welcoming participants, he reminded them that the past year had been a difficult one in the life and witness of the World Council, when new challenges and concerns had to be faced. This was a decisive moment in the history of the Council, and we were being called by God and by our churches to act responsibly and in a committed way.

Some of the difficulties faced by the Council would be outlined in his report and that of the General Secretary, and members of Central Committee would be asked to deliberate how best the challenges could be wrestled with and a new vision of the ecumenical movement identified for the coming years.

III. Roll Call and Seating of Substitutes

The General Secretary called the roll of Officers, Presidents and members. Apologies had been received from Mr Ajalat, Mr Anggui, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Peristerion, Dr Patelos, Mr Moukouyou-Kibouala; also from those whose churches had recommended substitutes: Mr Akhura, Dr Csiha, Metropolitan Daniel, Ms Davies-Izard, Frau Engel, Bishop Engelhardt, Ms Malpas, Ms Szabo-Matrai, and Mr Vailaau.

The seating of substitutes was agreed as follows:

- Prof. Ion Bria for Metr. Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina
- Dr Dizideriu Bustya for Bishop Dr Kálmán Csiha

- Rev. David Gill for Ms Jan Malpas
- Ato Wossen Seged Gebre Amlak for Ato Yayneshate Gebre Selassie
- Mr Gabriel Habib for Dr Charles Ajalat (15-20 September)
- Bishop Rolf Koppe for Prof. Dr Klaus Engelhardt
- OKR Tim Kuschnerus for Frau Edeltraud Engel
- Dr Gyula Nagy for Rev. Marianne Szabo-Matrai
- Rev. John Reardon for Ms Rosey Davies-Izard
- Rev. Dr Bruce Robbins for Mr Ari Carvalho (18-20 September)
- Rev. Kuateman Ulutui for Rev. Nove Vailaau
- Mr Stig Utne for Dr Anne Tveter (18-20 September)

The General Secretary then called the names of Delegated Representatives and Delegated Observers, and invited them together with Advisers and Observers to stand and be recognised.

At a later session, the Moderator drew attention to the presence of former General Secretary, Rev. Dr Emilio Castro, who attended some of the plenary sessions.

IV. In Memoriam

The Moderator called for a moment of silent prayer in memory of a number of people who had been close to the life of the WCC and the ecumenical who had passed away since the last meeting:

- Patriarch Parthenios III, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria and All Africa, a President of the World Council of Churches;
- Rev. Arvind Nirmal, Dalit theologian;
- Rev. Harry F.J. Daniel, former WCC staff member (CWM-UIIM) and Asian ecumenical leader;
- Rev. Ans van der Bent, first Librarian of the WCC Library;
- Dr Theodore Bachmann, former WCC staff member;
- Dr Hendrikus Berkhof, a delegate to the First Assembly at Amsterdam and member of Central Committee from 1954-1975;
- Dame R. Nita Barrow, Governor General of Barbados, former representative of Barbados at the UN, former WCC staff member (CMC) 1971-1981; a WCC President 1983-1991;
- Ms Madeleine Barot, early WCC staff member (Cooperation of Women and Men in the Church), retired staff member of CIMADE, France;
- Dr Jean Sindab, former WCC staff member (PCR);
- Sadao Watanabe, Japanese Christian artist;
- Mr Anders Mielke, general secretary of the Danish Missionary Society;
- Rev. K.J. John, Dalit leader, member of the Church of South India;

- Dr Robert S. Denny, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance 1969-1980;
- Bishop Andrej Beredi of the Slovak Evangelical Church, Augsburg Confession;
- Ms Darlene Keju-Johnson, United Church of Christ in the Marshall Islands, speaker at the Vancouver Assembly against nuclear testing in the Pacific;
- Justice Mrs Annie Jiagge, former WCC President (1975-1983), a former Moderator of the PCR Commission;
- Bishop Dr Imre Hodossy, Christian Reformed Church in Yugoslavia;
- Dr Reginald Amonoo-Larsen, former WCC staff member (CMC);
- Frère Max Thurian, a Taizé Brother, former WCC staff member (Faith and Order) who worked on the responses to BEM.

V. Agenda and Timetable

The General Secretary introduced the revised draft agenda, which was adopted.

VI. Minutes of Previous Meeting

No corrections having been received to the minutes of the forty-sixth meeting held in Geneva, 14-22 September 1995, they were approved as circulated.

VII. Appointment of Committees

As was customary, it was agreed that the Executive Committee act as the *Staffing and Nominations Committee* of the Central Committee.

The General Secretary indicated that, with a few modifications, the membership of *Unit Committees* and of the *General Secretariat Committee* remained as before. Substitutes and new members of Central Committee normally replace members in the same Committee.

Dr Nababan, moderator of the Staffing and Nominations Committee, proposed that the membership of the *Finance Committee* remain as before, with the addition of Bishop Renz. This was agreed.

VIII. New Members of Central Committee

Dr Nababan, on behalf of the Executive Committee acting as Staffing and Nominations Committee, indicated the names of six persons who had been

nominated to replace those who had resigned since the last meeting. The Central Committee **agreed** to their appointment, as follows:

- Dr Mihály **Almási**, Baptist Union of Hungary, replacing Rev. J. Viczian;
- Father Vsevolod **Chaplin**, Russian Orthodox Church, replacing Dr A. Buevsky;
- Ms Ülle **Keel**, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church, replacing Rev.A.Predele;
- Ms Kathy **Magnus**, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, replacing Sra D. Vasquez;
- Rev. Caroline **Pattiasina-Toreh**, Protestant Church of the Moluccas, Indonesia, replacing Dr Hesina Tetelepta;
- Pasteur Daniel **Vanescote**, United Protestant Church of Belgium, replacing Pasteur M. Beukenhorst.

IX. Applications for Membership

Dr Nababan indicated that the Executive Committee had considered applications for membership from The Methodist Church in Togo (Eglise méthodiste au Togo) and The Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa (Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa). These were referred to the General Secretariat Committee (see report, p.87).

X. Public Issues

The General Secretary reminded members of the procedures with regard to Public Issues, noting that requests for additional items should be presented to the Moderator of the Public Issues Committee (PIC) by the following day.

The Executive Committee had considered a background paper entitled *A Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs* which would be studied further by the PIC and a recommendation brought to a later session of Central Committee. The Central Committee **agreed** to the proposal by the Executive Committee.

On recommendation of the Executive Committee, membership of the **Public Issues Committee** was **agreed** as follows:

Dr Aaron Tolen - Moderator
Metr. Elias Audi

Presbyterian Church, Cameroon
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of
Antioch

Dr Marion Best

United Church of Canada

Most Rev. Edmond Browning
Fr. Vsevolod Chaplin
Ms Priyanka Mendis
Bishop Rolf Koppe

Dr Janice Love
Mrs Faith Mwendha
Rev. Hector Mendez
Rev. Valamotu Palu
Dr Park Jong-Wha

Rev. Carlos Sanchez
Dr Bert Supit

Rev. Elizabeth Welch

Episcopal Church, USA
Russian Orthodox Church
Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka
Evangelical Church in Germany
(EKD)

United Methodist Church, USA
Church of Uganda
Presbyterian Ref. Church in Cuba
Methodist Church in Tonga
Presbyterian Church in Rep. of
Korea

Baptist Association of El Salvador
Christian Evang. Church in
Minahasa

United Reformed Church in UK

The Public Issues Committee was empowered to coopt other members of Central Committee whose advice was required on specific matters under consideration.

XI. Stewards

The General Secretary invited the 28 stewards from 26 countries to introduce themselves. The Moderator greeted them warmly, and participants expressed appreciation for their presence and their attention to the tasks they would be carrying out in order to facilitate the smooth running of this meeting.

REPORTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY AND OF THE MODERATOR

I. Report of the General Secretary¹

Dr Raiser began by referring to the financial crisis which the World Council was currently experiencing, and though normally he did not deal with financial issues in his report, this time he felt obliged to render an account of how the staff have sought to exercise their responsibilities in the period since the last meeting of Central Committee.

¹ The full text appears in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.49, no.1, 1997.

The cancellation of the Executive Committee in March, by decision of the Officers, resulted in intense disappointment among the churches in the Pacific, though this was eased somewhat by an extended visit by the General Secretary and a team of staff. An extraordinary meeting of the Finance Sub-committee of the Executive took place in late March, while the Officers had an extended meeting in May with the Moderator of the Finance Committee present. However, the main burden of redressing the financial situation fell on the General Secretariat and the Staff Executive Group.

In response to concern expressed by some members about the continued viability of the WCC, Dr Raiser stated that the ability of the Council to respond to its basic mandate was not in jeopardy, in spite of severe budget and staff reductions. There was a strong conviction that there is a distinct role for the Council to fulfil, coupled with the hope that it would emerge as a strengthened fellowship from the present period of transformation.

Highlighting some of the programmatic activities carried out by the four Programme Units and the Offices related to the General Secretariat, Dr Raiser demonstrated that financial preoccupations had not paralysed their work. Some items were referred to in more detail in the respective activities reports, while others would receive specific attention in plenary sessions.

Dr Raiser went on to speak about the financial situation in more detail, describing the actions taken thus far and the issues that would have to be dealt with at this meeting. Signs of emerging problems, increasingly visible since early 1995, included declining income, losses on investments and forward currency contracts, and unrealistically high budget exchange rates, leading to diminishing reserves. Although the shortfall in the audited accounts for 1995 was a little lower than anticipated, the accumulated negative results of 1994 and 1995 in the area of undesignated funds had left little in the general reserve to cover any shortfall in 1996. It was clear that the 1997 budget must be reduced to the level of realistically anticipated income.

Following the Central Committee meeting in 1995, one of the first tasks of staff was to revise the 1996 budget; when it was approved by the Finance Sub-committee in March it showed a deficit of CHF 2.3 million. However with the instruction to reduce all expenditure by some 10%, it was hoped that the final deficit would in fact be lower than expected.

Work on the 1997 budget was guided by the need to stabilize the situation until 1999, when new directions would have been provided by the assembly. This meant maintaining the basic viability of the WCC in its present

framework; preserving the main programmatic thrusts and bringing priority programmes to a conclusion; using the Common Understanding and Vision process to develop alternatives to the present patterns of working for the period after the assembly.

The Units made efforts to establish programme priorities for 1996 and 1997 in line with available resources of staff and funding. A number of staff positions had not been filled but had been frozen, and staff had been re-grouped according to the priorities set, while budgets for meetings/consultations and travel were reduced.

Staff reductions were inevitable, especially in the area of the General Secretariat with its dependence on undesignated income and shared costs. How to achieve the reductions in a fair way, including the formulation of "early separation benefits" for staff being made redundant, had been the subject of some difficult consultations with the Staff Representative Group, and the process had naturally given rise to tensions and unhappiness.

A number of inter-related measures had made it possible to reduce the deficit for 1997 to CHF 1.35 million, due mainly to a readjustment of exchange rates, a shortfall of income for Bossey, an excess of shared costs beyond the 1996 level, and the amortisation of the costs of the staff restructuring process. No immediate improvement was foreseeable in the income situation, and the possibilities for staff reductions within the given structural and programme framework had been exhausted. If the Council were to regain long-term financial viability, basic changes were required - and these would have to be worked out and implemented in the period up to the assembly.

Lessons were to be learned specifically in four areas:

- The steady decline in the WCC's income had been documented in recent Financial Reports. Member church contributions have remained relatively stable but only half the member churches made their membership contribution in 1995. Activities income dropped by CHF 7 million from 1994 to 1995, and was expected to suffer a further loss of 16 million from 1996 to 1997. In the total turnover of funds there had been a decline of nearly 50% in the period from 1991 to 1997 - from CHF 117 million to a projected 60 million.

Many traditional donors were themselves facing financial difficulties, and projections indicated that they may not be able to maintain their present level of giving to the WCC in the coming years. Cultivating new sources of income was a long-term task and did not offer immediate results.

■ **The fund balances** held by the Council during the past 25 years had earned substantial investment income, but these had been gradually depleted mainly in order to balance budgets. They must be rebuilt in order to safeguard the viability of the Council, which meant that expenditure must be kept strictly within the limits of annually available income. Two factors contributed to the depletion of fund balances: the policy of fixed long-term exchange rates in order to facilitate budget planning; and losses on the consolidated Swiss Franc value of investment portfolios and forward currency contracts. In both cases policies had been changed in order to minimise risks in the future.

■ **Internal Budget Structure:** The gradual decrease of undesignated income from member church contributions and the increasing tendency towards designated funding had obliged the WCC to develop a complicated system of internal cost sharing, by which the units with independent income contribute to the cost of the central infrastructure of the WCC. The amount raised annually in this way had, over recent years, represented about 30% of the total general expenditure of the units.

With income for the units declining, the amount of shared costs must be re-adjusted: the units would have to plan for some 30% of their available general income to be set aside for shared costs, and the infrastructure must to be flexible enough to be adjusted to the level of internal income. Effective management and cost control would thus become a higher priority.

■ **Expenditure Structure:** The ratio between salaries and operational or programme expenditure was critically important. In the early 1980s salaries represented about 60% of the WCC's general expenditure, but this proportion had increased steadily in recent years, reaching 73% in 1994. The recent reductions in staff would bring the ratio to below 65% in 1996/97.

Even more critical was the relationship between salaries and general income. Salary costs had exceeded general income by as much as 3 million in 1996; in 1997 this would be brought into balance again. In the long term, however, salaries and related charges should be kept well below the level of general income available.

An analysis of the WCC's income and expenditure structure in 1990 led to a suggested maximum of 270 staff by the end of 1992. For 1995/96 this was set at 250 full-time equivalents (FTEs), but this proved to be too high, and the actual number of core staff in 1996 had decreased to 237 FTEs. In 1997, a core staff of 190 FTEs was planned, but even that may have to be further adjusted depending on income available. For the time following the assembly,

the whole structure of permanent staff with long-term contracts would have to be reviewed. A similar review was necessary for the general institutional and administrative expenses of the Council, for example, the cost of governing and advisory bodies, which absorb a substantial part of general income available.

Many people were asking what hope there was for the future of the WCC? Dr Raiser asserted that if he had no hope and did not believe the WCC had an important role to fulfil, then he would probably not be in the position entrusted to him. He believed this question should primarily be addressed to members of Central Committee as the central governing body of the Council. It would only be possible to overcome the present crisis and develop a more sustainable shape for the Council if there were a shared conviction among the member churches about the future role of the Council. Dr Raiser believed that the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) process offered the basis for a response to this challenge.

Dr Raiser told members of Central Committee that their work on the draft document on CUV would have crucial significance: he urged them to seize the opportunity to provide clear directions towards and beyond the assembly. The staff were expecting from them a courageous sign of hope.

When the theme *Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope* was first proposed for the Harare Assembly, few could anticipate its timeliness, both for the WCC and the churches. The WCC had probably reached the end of a road that began some thirty years ago. Since the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 and the Geneva conference on Church and Society in 1966, ecumenical activity had expanded enormously, but the institutional arrangements into which we have settled during this period were rapidly becoming barriers to the way forward. Many churches found themselves in similar conditions. The WCC was particularly vulnerable since it depended on the voluntary commitment of its member churches to a calling which transcended their own immediate institutional preoccupations. The Assembly must therefore be a moment not only for reassessment and recommitment but also for lifting the ecumenical movement to a qualitatively new level, looking forward to the 21st century.

Conversion and hope were closely related. We can turn to God only because God has first turned to us in Jesus Christ and is faithful in his promise. The hope nourished by God's promise is the source of courage for change and radical renewal, the courage to turn around when we have reached the end of the road. We are not only *called* to "one hope" as the theme for the World

Mission Conference affirms, but we are also invited to *give an account* of the hope that is in us. So what hope and vision do we have for the ecumenical movement and the WCC which would provide orientation in this period of transition?

Dr Raiser then commented on aspects of the draft document on Common Understanding and Vision to be presented during this Central Committee meeting. In its present form the document concentrated on clarifying the "self-understanding of the WCC", its basic mandate and *raison d'être*. It developed a relational understanding of the Council based on the formulation in the Basis which speaks of the WCC as a "fellowship of churches", and raised the question, What does it mean for the churches to be part of this fellowship? The text says:

"The essence of the Council is not the relationship of the churches to the WCC as an .. institution, but their relationship to one another. We may say that the Council *has* a structure, but not that it *is* a structure. It *is* the churches together in fellowship on their way towards visible unity, and .. more than an instrument for co-operation or a provider of.. services. It is the churches .. working towards *koinonia* in faith, life and witness, using the WCC as an instrument for this purpose. This means that the churches' ecumenical vision and commitment need constant renewal if the Council's ecumenical witness is to be effective and convincing."

Dr Raiser had learned from his visits to member churches that this was not necessarily how most of them understand the Council. Many saw it as a service organisation. Many have yet to accept that the practice of open fellowship and accountability, especially with other member churches in the same country or region, was an implication of their membership in the WCC.

He saw the document as a challenge; it went beyond the search for a common denominator among the diverse understandings of the WCC found in the member churches. While it reaffirmed the foundational documents from Amsterdam onwards, it was an invitation to the churches to turn to the future, to the promise of *koinonia* with God in Christ and with each other; an invitation to genuine renewal and reorientation of the churches' ecumenical vision and commitment. If the churches were to appropriate and live this understanding of their fellowship with each other through the WCC, a qualitatively new stage of the ecumenical movement would have been reached. Were the churches prepared for this? The purpose of discussion in Central Committee was not to debate particular formulations, but to consider whether

the direction was the right one, and to design ways in which the member churches can be drawn into this process during the two years up to the Assembly. This would be of crucial importance for the Council's future.

The question of representation through fixed quotas was a legitimate concern, but the institutional structure of the WCC had become too heavy, particularly in relation to its very limited authority. Too much energy and resources were tied up in processes of reporting and decision-making which have little effect on the life of the churches, and it must be admitted that it had not been possible to ensure genuine participation from all sectors of the life of our churches. If the mandate of the Council were to deepen the sense of fellowship and communion between the churches, some fundamental change was needed in the Council's institutional set-up.

Careful consideration would be needed as to how the Council should be organized to serve truly as a catalyst of relationships between the churches. These relationships increasingly included the Roman Catholic Church and other churches which are not members of WCC. The Council had always been a unique body for which there was no organizational model. The present model followed certain traditions of Protestant church order, which were themselves a reflection of specific political and constitutional patterns. Dr Raiser was persuaded that the practice of conciliar forms of life in relationships in the early church could provide orientation even for today.

Obviously the WCC was not the exclusive instrument for building relationships among member churches, most of which were established without its involvement. While the WCC should no longer see itself as the centre of the ecumenical movement, it is the only existing organisation which can safeguard the coherence of ecumenical efforts on all levels.

The relational understanding of the WCC referred to in the CUV document had consequences for the way it carried out its work as an organisation. What was the specific task of the WCC as the most representative ecumenical body at international level? How can its programmatic activities be integrated more fully into the efforts at building relationships? What was the scope of the "common calling" which the member churches strive to fulfil through the WCC? How was this "common calling" related to the "common cause" which the churches share with all those "whose purpose is the promotion of peace, justice and responsible care for the earth"?

It was clear that in future the Council would have to refrain from assuming direct programme responsibility in areas where others were better equipped

to act. It should be prepared to withdraw from programmatic activities which it has initiated but for which other ecumenical partners on national or regional level have subsequently accepted responsibility. The Council should serve as enabler, coordinator, communicator, convener and sometimes mediator, always eager to activate and encourage the use of capacities and resources available in the member churches or among other ecumenical partners.

The WCC's constitutional mandate obliges it to give prominence to and accept programmatic responsibility in the areas of unity, mission and evangelism, justice and service, and education. The content and methodology of work in these areas would continue to change: study, reflection and analysis must be linked more intentionally with efforts at ecumenical formation. The importance of international meetings and consultations may decline while other creative ways are found to generate ecumenical exchange and dialogue, using advanced means of communication. Being "so widely representative a Christian body" (Rule X.2), the WCC would continue to take on a public profile as an international voice of the community of Christian churches through public statements, delegations and pastoral visits, and analyses offered to the churches. The implications of growing globalization would require the WCC to act as an advocate where human dignity and the sustainability of human communities were at stake. In all these activities, the churches through the WCC strive to manifest their *koinonia* in faith, life and witness.

These tentative considerations would suggest that after the Harare Assembly, the permanent institutional structure of the WCC could be reshaped without compromising its central mandate. In that sense, the report of the 1991 Advisory Committee on Programmatic Reorganization may not have gone far enough, since it did not address questions regarding appropriate governing structures of the WCC: this task remained to be done and this section of the document still had to be drafted, based on advice received during this meeting of Central Committee, before being shared with member churches for their response.

Concluding his report, Dr Raiser asserted that "the World Council of Churches stands at a crossroads. It will be decisive which way we turn. Painful as it is, the financial crisis has perhaps come at the right moment. Crisis, we are told, means both danger and opportunity. Let us then seize the opportunities offered to us and shape them constructively and with courage. Faithful to our common calling and trusting in God's grace, let us work together to build a new community of hope."

Discussion

Speakers expressed thanks to the General Secretary for his clear and honest report on the financial situation of the Council.

Metropolitan Ambrosius felt the basic problem was not primarily a financial one - that simply reflected the unhappiness of many member churches about the way the WCC had been structured and financed over the past decades. The organisation was too centralised with its bureaucratic structures and focus on quotas. Once the churches see clearly the urgency of our ecumenical task and the value of the WCC as an agency to fulfil it, they will contribute financially. He was not worried about the future in view of the fruitful study process on CUV that had been entered upon; we need our spiritual and intellectual resources to clarify our vision and generate a model that will lead us into the next century. But this may require reorganisation of the Council in order to enable it to function in a more flexible way.

Bishop Renz believed that the life of the church was more than budget deficits and was glad the General Secretary was not too dismayed by the difficult financial situation. Churches in Germany and elsewhere were encountering similar problems, and if Central Committee had to make some hard decisions this would be a good example to the member churches, as would the message of hope that we can follow new ways.

Mr Koshy was encouraged by the General Secretary's assurance of the ability of the Council to respond to the problems, so that its mandated task was not in jeopardy in spite of the situation. On the other hand he was disturbed to learn that 50% of member churches do not make any financial contribution. Many of these may be in the third world, but as a member of a third world church himself he appealed to them to make a special effort to support the Council financially, however small the amount.

What do "ecumenical relationships" mean to those at local level? asked Mr Lodberg. Are we ready to take the necessary steps locally in order to become ecumenical churches? What does WCC membership mean theologically for our churches? Does it mean giving up confessional identity and receiving a new common identity? That was one of the basic problems, because our churches are currently strengthening their own confessional identities in response to the challenges of post-modern society. Also, for many churches, being ecumenical means becoming bilateral partners with other churches and not using the WCC as an instrument any more. Did the General Secretary have any thoughts about any future relationship between the WCC and world confessional communities?

Barbara Bazett saw the ecumenical movement as one of the movements of the Holy Spirit in the 20th century - if it were to die, it would be reborn. She stressed the urgency of mission among the different churches - the need to spread the vision of the ecumenical movement. If the people of God are infused with enthusiasm they will contribute funds, but if they see the Council as irrelevant there will be no wish for involvement. Friends work closely with the UN in Geneva and New York, but she felt they should also work with global religious organisations where they would also be able to affect policy. In worship we experience the sense of being one in Christ; Christ is not divided and we can be more effective if we work together. The fact that here in Central Committee we are all members of national churches, listening to one God, was quite a different experience from being at the UN.

The WCC was to some extent a victim of its own success, said Dr Page. There were so many local and national ecumenical happenings, as well as regional bodies, that the churches become confused and tend to choose local ecumenism as an alternative to the wider sphere of the WCC. Secondly, she was concerned that some programmatic areas might be lost and urged that Central Committee have some hand in the process of prioritising.

Mr Moseme felt that too little had been done to conscientise member churches about their financial responsibility towards the Council. Many churches see the WCC as an organisation based far away in Geneva which they know little about - so they find it irrelevant. More should be done to make the Council better known among the churches.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson appreciated the link made by the General Secretary between the financial crisis and the CUV process. Central Committee must look at the vision and purpose of the WCC for the future, rather than at the lack of income. The General Secretary spoke of the need to strengthen our fellowship as churches with one another; last year he mentioned the need to link together in wider fellowship the families of the Christian community, the majority of whom were outside WCC membership. Such tasks would require a major shift in the policies and working style of the Council. He asked the General Secretary to elaborate on the phrase "institutional captivity of the WCC", and whether some guidance might be provided from the conciliar structure of the early church.

Dr Walker-Smith referred to the possible moving away from programmatic activities and wondered whether any criteria were under consideration by which to determine which programmes would not be continued into the future.

Dr Mandeng was aware that there were many African churches among those which had not contributed financially to the WCC, due in part to the long term effects of the devaluation of the CFA three years ago. He suggested that one way of easing the financial problem would be to seek people who would be willing to work for the WCC on a voluntary basis.

Comparing Hiroshima's destruction 50 years ago with the newly built city of today, Ms Nontawasee believed that facing up to a major crisis was not only a time of hopelessness but a time when people can raise themselves above it and achieve something mighty. She was grateful for the General Secretary's hopeful and insightful approach to the present situation.

Dr Nagy referred to the difficult times that Christians in Eastern Europe had gone through but stressed that, by their very nature, Christians cannot be pessimists: they had experienced God's presence even during the hardest times, and had not given up hope. With regard to the financial situation, he felt the WCC should provide more guidance to member churches and Christians around the world, as is done by the Vatican, for example. People look for guidance especially on questions of Christian unity and social ethics. He recalled the early days of his ecumenical career when, with a smaller staff and lower costs, the WCC had made a tremendous impact on the life of the churches. This should remind us to act in hope as we deal with the task of reshaping the WCC in the best way for the member churches and Christians around the world.

Member churches could be encouraged to make their contributions in Swiss Francs as the United Reformed Church does, suggested Ms Welch. She wondered whether it was realistic to hope that member churches which had not so far contributed might in fact do so if a new vision were adopted. In her opinion, Faith and Order's current study on Ecclesiology provided a good parallel to the CUV study in terms of challenging each of us to look again at our identity and see in which ways God is calling us to a new Christian identity in one body of Christ. She called for more understanding and vision as an important part of our way forward, leading to greater financial viability and enthusiasm for the Council's work.

Metropolitan Audi saw in this report a response to the calling of the Holy Spirit; this was the first time Central Committee had received a document of this genre - and he believed it was prophetic because he sensed the spirit of freedom. Since he had participated in this body of the churches he had often felt a prisoner to certain issues: too much stress was laid upon structures. The General Secretary was now speaking about unity in a prophetic tone; it was

a goal for us to continue rowing the boat towards the shore of unity. We are here to implement what God wants us to do.

Mr Elisa Mbugo spoke of the concern for participation and the need for member churches to understand their commitment to the WCC. Education can be done at local level by NCCs, to create an understanding of the need to contribute to the WCC. By working with REOs, NCCs and member churches, new ways can be found to carry programmes forward.

Dr Papas noted that some churches did abide by their financial commitments to the WCC while others did not. If churches did not contribute, and did not send their representatives to WCC meetings, it showed something of their attitude to the WCC.

Archpriest Petliuchenko took up Dr Raiser's reference to his impressions on visiting member churches and his conclusion that membership in WCC in the future may involve closer cooperation among churches within a country. However, in his country it was difficult to say that membership in the WCC helps the churches to draw closer to one another. Churches in the post-communist situation find themselves in a difficult situation ecumenically, and the WCC was only of interest if it responded to their needs. He feared the Council was losing the voice of the churches, so it was urgent to think about new ways of working, especially in programmes involving peace-making.

Ms Rani expressed thanks to Dr Raiser for his visit to India and assured him that it had made an impact on the member churches. It was this kind of direct contact that helped communicate the reality of the Council; unless every member church knows about the WCC and about each other, they cannot claim to be in fellowship.

General Secretary's Response

Dr Raiser was encouraged by the strong affirmation that the WCC should appeal to its member churches, particularly to those which had not so far contributed. This had in fact been begun, but those who had tried to identify the problem had noted a basic difficulty of understanding the WCC and the nature of their participation in it as the main cause for a lack of response. This showed the need for consciousness-raising, confirmed by his visits to member churches which demonstrated a lack of understanding rather than unhappiness. It was not so much a matter of formulating a new understanding, but it was important that member churches, for the first time, be given the opportunity to deal with this challenge of understanding the Council as being part of what it means for them to be the church, rather than a service agency.

Secondly, he was glad that many speakers had referred to attempts to place emphasis on the situation locally between communities in the same place or country. This had also arisen in his visits to member churches. Much needed to be done to bring the way in which we relate to one another in the same area in line with what was said in Central Committee, for example. What should be done to interpret this implication of membership more fully? The revised text on the Meaning of Membership offered opportunity to address the issue again. We need to draw the other ecumenical partner organisations that have the same churches as their members into this process of reassessing what our ecumenical commitment means locally. Withdrawing into confessional identity in the belief that this can protect us from the influences of post-modernism is an illusion. But our ecumenical fellowship can protect us from this - locally, nationally and internationally.

Responding to questions concerning the criteria by which we determine what is a priority programme: Dr Raiser said this had to be worked on - it was not something that could be pre-judged. We have to clarify what are those core activities which need to be visible in order to identify the WCC, and since not everything can be included, the discussion would be a painful one.

Regarding his reference to a conciliar form of life as a possible perspective, Dr Raiser said the WCC had had important previous reflections on what conciliarity could mean for the future of the ecumenical movement (cf. the Louvain Faith and Order meeting in 1971). The advice developed at that time was even more to the point today than it was then.

Responding to Ms Welch, Dr Raiser believed it was possible to encourage churches to pay their contributions in Swiss Francs; this had been discussed but some find it difficult. He applauded the URC and hoped the suggestion would be taken to heart by others.

It was clear we have to assess whatever we say about the future vision of WCC in terms of what it means for the financial base of the WCC. He agreed about the need for realism regarding the vision, noting that financial analysis should never determine our vision or our account of hope. Concerning the relationship between the CUV process and the study on ecclesiology: this was the subject of intensive discussion in the Faith and Order Commission in Moshi, and the linkage had been clearly established.

Concluding, Dr Raiser acknowledged explicitly the significant contribution that the Faith and Order Board had made to the sharpening of our Common Understanding and Vision.

II. Report of the Moderator²

The Moderator gave a summary of his report, beginning with an explanation of why the Executive Committee did not meet as planned in March 1996 in the Solomon Islands. Shortly before the meeting, nearly half the members had sent apologies which would have meant that there would probably not be a quorum. This decision caused great disappointment and hurt to those involved in planning the meeting in the Solomon Islands, but a visit by the General Secretary and a staff team had helped to strengthen relationships and a moving sign of reconciliation was offered to him by Bishop Philemon Riti of the United Church of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

After touching briefly upon the financial situation of the Council, the Moderator gave a brief outline of the work carried out in the past year. It was clear however that the Council's work could not be continued in its present programmatic structure: radical changes were needed. Staff had already given attention to establishing a process for programme priorities, and were looking at possible future management structures especially in the General Secretariat. Other work had included continuing Assembly preparations; actions taken in the area of international affairs and public issues; the Common Understanding and Vision process; team visits to member churches in the framework of the Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. Possible ways of celebrating the year 2000 were being explored together with other bodies interested in some ecumenical commemoration, while proposals were being considered for celebrating the WCC's 50th anniversary. The Ecumenical Institute at Bossey would celebrate its jubilee in October 1996.

The Moderator devoted the main part of his report to the question of **Ethnicity**, which had acquired a crucial urgency on the agenda of the international community. He looked at the issue in the context of what we can do to deal with it consciously and responsibly in all its aspects and implications. He had tried to discern what could be the possible role of the churches - not so much in terms of ethnic conflict resolution, but in the process of ethnic conflict prevention.

It was clear that ethnicity would stay high on the ecumenical agenda in the coming years. Churches cannot remain indifferent to ethnic tensions. In some situations churches are undoubtedly involved in such actions, and are a part

² The full text appears in *The Ecumenical Review*, Vol.49, no.1, 1997

of a conflict situation in many parts of the world. In other cases they must play a pivotal role in eradicating ethnocentric ideologies that perpetuate ethnic confrontations. Therefore the churches and the ecumenical movement should seriously discuss ethnicity and identify its implications for the life and mission of the churches. He proposed two questions for consideration:

- How to respond realistically and responsibly to ethnicity, which, in one form or another, is present in almost all societies?
- How to discern the challenges that ethnicity presents to the witness and service of our churches in the present-day world?

In his view, ethnic conflicts and tensions have a common root cause, namely, the intrinsic need for a people to gain security by defining their particular identity and rights and by struggling to achieve recognition and autonomy - i.e. the whole question of security is at the heart of ethnic conflicts and tensions. The desire for security was the natural drive of all ethnic groups and nations, and two specific manifestations of these could be pinpointed:

- a) *Affirmation of Identity*: All people have the right to affirm their racial, cultural, religious ethnic identity. Identity means security. Ethnic boundaries are not necessarily territorial boundaries - they may be identity boundaries too. Nations feel secure when they are in a position to manifest fully their own identity. But the freedom of an individual or group of persons to preserve and express their identities should not be a threat to others; any affirmation of identity must not entail prejudice against those who are different.

The affirmation of our own identities - a legitimate concern - should also provide space for the expression of the other's identity; the affirmation of a person's own identity should not be at the expense of the other's identity. Here our churches on the basis of our Christian faith should play a significant role by affirming an inclusive identity, recognising and accepting others and calling them to a community of diverse identities. The churches should work together for a *culture of solidarity* that builds community and relationships while opposing the *culture of exclusion* that generates violence and alienation. The church has a God-given vocation to draw together the different identities in their full integrity and freedom and renew them in Jesus Christ.

There are plenty of examples in our respective histories, including the present times, where our churches have been called to make a choice

between becoming instruments of ethnic ideologies, and being faithful to their prophetic witness and identity in Jesus Christ. The Church of Christ in different cultural contexts is called to be truly itself, to realise its real nature by becoming an authentic sign of a reconciled community across diverse ethnic identities and boundaries.

- b) The *Right to Self-Determination* is a legitimate concern of all people. But this question of self-identity with its different interpretations has become one of the complex problems of our world. What does it mean? How can we conceive self-determination and how can we articulate it? The UN Charter asserts that self-determination is the right of all peoples but there is no international mechanism to protect or articulate that right.

Is self-determination a relative or an absolute right? This remains an open and complex question. What precisely does self-determination mean? Can we develop a self-determination that aims at integration rather than disintegration, unification rather than division? In tackling the question of ethnicity and self-determination in the context of the evolving world order, attention must be given to the inter-connection between self-determination and security.

Many issues, including questions of Human Rights and territorial integrity, are intimately related to the self-determination issue. There is no easy answer. But if the world is really moving towards a multi-ethnic global order, the question of self-determination should be addressed comprehensively. Human Rights issues have always received attention from the ecumenical movement; the churches can and should play a significant role - through education, advocacy, empowering the marginalised, and by promoting awareness of the importance of human rights and self-determination.

The Moderator then went on to deal with the question: How can the churches respond to ethnic conflicts?

In view of the destructive and far-reaching consequences of ethnic conflicts, the international community must make every effort to find a comprehensive way to achieve a permanent settlement in each case. In the past such conflicts have been handled through compromise or oppression, but neither has resolved the problems. The UN has no mechanism as yet to deal with ethnic conflicts, but discussions are beginning in UN circles about the need for preventive diplomacy. The creation of a new international legal order which would protect the integrity, security and rights of peoples, is urgently needed.

The Moderator expressed his belief that the WCC, as a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional body with a concept of *koinonia* and *conciliarity*, where *justice* and *peace* are deeply reflected upon in their dynamic interrelatedness, is the right place to deal seriously with the question of ethnicity in an atmosphere of mutual challenge, correction and understanding. Many ethnic groups are represented in this Council. So how can we together look in an existential way at these ethnic tensions and discern our role as churches? The specific role of the church is not one of problem solving but essentially one of conflict prevention. This could be done by promoting justice, participation, reconciliation and dialogue. Such a goal could be obtained not by reacting or challenging but by awareness building, education and formation.

The churches should first of all recognise and repent of their own complicity in many cases of ethnic tension and conflict. They must transcend their ethnic boundaries and unite around the vision of a holistic and just society perceived in the perspective of the Kingdom of God. The churches are called to manifest themselves as a conciliar fellowship of mutual commitment which goes beyond geographical, cultural and ethnic confines. Our role is not an easy one, but then, our Christian faith does not provide easy answers. The churches must see the prevention of ethnic conflicts as a long-term task, a process intended to reaffirm our long-standing commitment to a *just society*, *participatory democracy*, *a community of diversities* and *ethical sustainable humanity*. In terms of preventing ethnic conflicts, our churches can and should play a significant role through formation, education, conscientisation.

- 1) *Towards Justice and Peace*: Ethnic conflicts arise from situations of injustice. Thus the peace building process - integral to our Christian vocation - also requires a justice-generating process. Christian faith affirms the interrelatedness of justice and peace, and this has become one of the vital dimensions of our ecumenical social thought and action. How can we give a new articulation to the role of our churches and of the WCC in terms of reminding people that we cannot have lasting peace if there is no justice? Real peace is sustained by justice. The churches should do all they can to promote justice, protect the rights of the marginalised, and work for people's interests, people's justice, participation, peace. This has been a sacred ecumenical legacy and should remain a major missionary strategy. The JPIC Convocation in Seoul (1990) called the churches to develop a *culture of active non-violence* as an effective way toward peace with justice.
- 2) *Towards Participatory Democracy*: This dimension of ecumenical social thought has been very much a living presence in our reflection in the

ecumenical movement. Real democracy is based on people's participation, with equal opportunity for all.

Ethnicity implies a majority-minority relationship, and as such, produces tension between equality and difference. The question here is how to move from ethno-centric nationalism - that denies the rights of the other - to a democratic society? Nation-building processes must be based on a firm recognition of multi-ethnic plurality and multi-ethnic participation. Any so-called democratic system where the people are not fully taking part, freely raising their concerns and expectations, is not a democracy. In any democracy, multi-ethnic participation in the structures of decision-making is of crucial importance.

A basic requirement of democracy is the decentralisation of the central power of state authority. Governance of multi-ethnic societies on the basis of democratic principles implies the active participation of all sectors of civil society. Decentralisation challenges the notion of "one ethnic group - one state" and ensures the participation of all. The development of a multi-ethnic electoral system is crucial for a participatory democracy, and here the Moderator cited Lebanon as an example where all communities fully participate in the country's election and decision-making processes.

The churches can play a major role through people-oriented action programmes, through education and conscientisation, empowering people to participate responsibly in the governance of their countries. The vision of a "participatory society" should remain an objective of ecumenical social action.

- 3) *Towards a Reconciled Diversity*: Two parallel forces dominate the global situation: one leading to integration, the other towards fragmentation and disintegration. Ethnic pluralism can be both a potential source of conflict and a means of preventing it. When a state is based on a majority-minority relationship and pursues an oppressive policy, it generates ethnic tensions - so ethnic differences can become a source of conflict because of injustice. But when a state adopts a policy of multi-ethnicity where all groups can express themselves freely, then it creates a shared community of mutual respect and reconciled diversity.

Living together in diversity and living our diversities together has become an urgent imperative in a world where people of different backgrounds are bound to live together as neighbours in one community.

Thus, the governance of a multi-ethnic society requires mutual understanding and accountability, tolerance, and a process of community-building. State-building on the other hand empowers the ruling elite and strengthens state authority at the expense of the people, widening the gap between state and people by creating ethnic ghettos.

The churches should be promoting dialogue among ethnic groups, based on mutual respect and acceptance of each other's specificities. This should be a dialogue of life where people interact, a dialogue of solidarity, transcending diversities and leading them to reconciliation.

Churches today can work in collaboration with NGOs, action groups and movements of civil society towards a society where ethnic groups are not living in isolation from each other but in peaceful co-existence, reconciled in their diversities. In many cases churches are in a situation where they cannot promote such a community; in others they are promoting ethno-centrism; in yet others they are part of the conflict. But our Christian vocation obliges us to come out of our isolated ethno-centric ghettos and see ourselves as people of God in relation with others, as part of a community where people of all ethnic groups and cultures are reconciled in their diversities.

- 4) *Towards an Ethically Sustainable Society:* All these goals can be achieved when societies are guided by ethical values. Societies today are dominated by secularism, consumerism and materialism, with marginalised religious values. The market economy, technology and communication have become guiding forces. So the churches in dialogue with those of other living faiths should transform the life of humanity, sustaining it by moral and spiritual values, challenging its self-sufficiency.

International law governing the conduct of nations must have a moral basis; the pursuit of national interests should not be at the expense of peoples' interests and security. The proliferation of weapons and diffusion of military technology should be stopped, and effective international mechanisms established to control the arms trade.

Access to resources and services is the basic right of all citizens in a nation-state - a basic ethical value that should be respected by all. The churches should promote a global political ethics of justice and peace in dialogue with those of other religions. The major missionary calling for the churches and the ecumenical movement is to transform society by making it ethically sustainable.

Concluding Remarks

- The Council has made a long-standing commitment to challenge racism; similarly it must address the issue of ethnicity in all its aspects and implications by making it a Council-wide priority for the coming years. The churches and particularly those immediately exposed to issues of ethnicity and ethno-centrism can play a significant role in this respect.
- While maintaining the ecclesial nature of ecumenism we must go beyond the confines of ecclesiastical ecumenism by establishing close collaboration with other partners of civil society, working together for the prevention of ethnic conflict.
- We must continue with new vigour our ecumenical diplomacy, public speaking and advocacy. In spite of their limitations, these actions still retain their value and impact. But it is not enough to condemn, to associate ourselves with the marginalised and suffering - we must act on the basis of our Christian calling and convictions and address the root causes of injustice. How can we articulate in a more dynamic and tangible way our diakonia of political justice as we are doing in relation to our diakonia of service?
- The process of justice, peace and integrity of creation should remain at the heart of the ecumenical vision for the next millennium. This is not to undermine the vital importance of unity, mission and evangelism, which should remain there as the backbone of our ecumenical life and action. But how can we articulate our concern for visible unity, our commitment to mission and evangelism, through the JPIC process?

In a world where justice is denied to many, the churches should struggle for the restoration of full justice. In a world where violence has invaded all spheres of human life, the churches are called to become peace-makers. In a world where identities are denied, cultures are destroyed and people are constantly alienated from their land, churches must struggle for identity, reconciliation and community.

How can the ecumenical movement as a frontier movement help the churches respond to the challenges of ethnicity and particularly to ethno-centrism? The churches must recapture the biblical vision of a just society or a transformed humanity in a transformed creation - but how can the churches become the visible sign and model of inclusive community in the perspective of the Kingdom of God when they themselves are divided along ethnic lines? Ethnicity is indeed a challenge to churches, calling for self-assessment and self-understanding of the authentic nature and vocation of the church.

The Moderator concluded by proposing that, as we start dealing seriously with the question of ethnicity, trying to identify its implications for our ecclesiologies and missiologies, we should "go back to Seoul where we entered into a *Covenant Solidarity for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*. Let us become a community of hope and sharing through repentance, conversion and discipleship. Let us affirm that human rights are God-given and that their promotion and protection are essential for freedom, justice and peace. Finally, let us affirm that as churches we will resist all structures and systems that violate human rights and deny the opportunity for the realisation of the full potential of individuals and peoples. We must be aware of the limitations and risks of such a prophetic ministry and ecumenical pilgrimage in today's complex world, but we must respond to our common calling responsibly, humbly and boldly."

Discussion

Dr Kässmann thanked the Moderator for his emphasis on ethnic issues and his encouragement for the work of Unit III. She was encouraged that the conciliar process for JPIC was in the centre of his vision for the next millennium. She noted that: 1) In Unit III's Indigenous Peoples programme, a working group had been formed on Racism, Ethnicity and Indigenous People. 2) In the context of the Theology of Life study the ten affirmations of Seoul referred to by the Moderator had been taken up; this study would be reported on to Central Committee in 1997. 3) Considerable work had been done on a profile for the Programme to Overcome Violence which would be presented in the report of the Unit Committee. She was convinced that conflict-prevention and non-violent resolution of conflicts offered a decisive impulse for the continuation of JPIC.

Bishop Boseto spoke with regret and personal disappointment about the cancellation of the Executive Committee that should have taken place in Honiara. He asked that Archbishop Pogo's letter be shared with members of Central Committee so that they could see something of the disappointment and hurt felt by the people of the Pacific churches, including non-member churches. Secondly, he asked that the Moderator write a personal response to the Archbishop in addition to the explanatory letter sent by the General Secretary. An act of reconciliation had taken place in Fiji in the context of the General Secretary's visit to the Pacific Conference of Churches, but that was far away from those in the Solomon Islands who were most affected by the cancelled visit.

Mr Lodberg felt that an attempt should be made to try to answer the Moderator's question: is self-determination a relative or an absolute right? If

we think it is an absolute right, what does that mean? Many churches in Europe were involved in helping people argue for historical rights to certain areas of land. Can we really still speak about historical rights to land today, after the Second World War? This question must be discussed: we say self-determination is an absolute right but we have to move towards finding how it can be seen as a relative right for the churches.

Bishop Rogerson saw the search for the visible unity of the church as probably the most important contribution the WCC could make to the issue. Within our churches we must resist any institutionalisation of ethnic divisions, and try to ensure that the diversity of God's people is seen as something positive. Secondly, one of the most difficult tasks in relation to church unity schemes was that of bringing majority/minority churches together, and he asked for advice from anyone who had been involved in such efforts. On the justice issue, in church union schemes, some thought could be given about the sharing of resources.

Ms Westra took up the Moderator's reference to the right to preserve our own identity and that this not be a threat to others. In reality it was different, and she suggested that a deeper analysis was required: what about the role played by faith in shaping our identity? She felt that in our search for identity we tended to look for the wrong things, which creates violence. Faith teaches that we cannot in the end determine our own identity - we have to give it up in order to make room for God who gives us new identity, so that we no longer have to worry about it but can begin to help others find their identity.

Bishop Zacharias noted that the UN had failed to solve the problem of ethnicity because it has neither the mechanism nor the will to do so. The UN must transcend playing subservience to powerful nations; it needs the vision of one humanity. If the church is an active participant in ethnic conflicts, how can it solve the problem? The church has to transcend its ethnic nature and become a kingdom community instead of an ethnic one. The UN, the churches, and other organisations and people interested in the peace of the world must work together for a just participatory community. Secondly, what did the Moderator mean by a "new international legal order"? Would he see this as replacing the United Nations? Lastly, he hoped that the Programme to Overcome Violence would take up seriously the issue of ethnic violence.

Some distinction was needed between the positive and destructive sides of ethnicity, said Dr Blei. He felt the situation here was more complicated than the Moderator had indicated when he spoke of the role of the churches. Nevertheless, the churches have the task of transcending their ethnic situation

and being protagonists of ethnic identity. The fact that many churches are divided along ethnic lines was a matter that deserved more severe criticism.

Response of the Moderator

The Moderator expressed appreciation for the observations and critical remarks made by members of Central Committee, and repeated that he had no clear answers to some of the questions related to this complex issue.

He acknowledged that some work had been done on the question of ethnicity and some of the concerns had been articulated through particular programmes including JPIC, but in his judgement the Council had not yet succeeded in encouraging the churches to take up the issue as their own process in their own life and witness. How could we help them to be committedly involved?

Responding to Mr Lodberg on whether self-determination is an absolute or a relative right, the Moderator left this as an open question. Personally he believed it could not be relativised - self-determination is the right of all people. But we cannot say it is relative for some and absolute for others.

He agreed with Bishop Rogerson that ethnicity has implications for our ecclesiologies and missiologies, and he acknowledged the need to deal more in depth with the question of the unity of the church in the context of ethnicity.

In response to Ms Westra, he commented that ethnicity was not a bad thing when practised properly, but as a state ideology it could become a dangerous reality, and many examples could be found in history. We need to be able to affirm our identity but that identification makes us open to other identities.

III. Response by the Central Committee

At a later session, Ms Gcabashe presented the report of the General Secretariat Committee which had given due attention to the Reports of the General Secretary and the Moderator.

- a) The GS Committee commended the General Secretary for the detailed and honest account of the present state of the World Council of Churches. It welcomed the analysis of the financial crisis and the hope held out to transform the crisis into an opportunity to reshape the Council.

In the ensuing discussion that dealt with the general ecumenical situation and the place of the WCC within it, the following comments were made on specific paragraphs of the report:

- The GS Committee welcomed the understanding of the Council primarily as a fellowship of churches that seek to deepen their relationship with one another;
- It saw good potential in the attempt to understand the nature of this relationship in terms of the conciliar movement in the early church rather than in terms of organizational structures;
- It noted the relevance of regional and national councils of churches for the future style of WCC work, as well as the possibility of structuring WCC representation along the lines of ecclesial families;
- It noted the need to be attentive to the inevitable tension between increasing membership of the Council, which in itself is to be welcomed, and the possible need to reduce the size and representation in the governing bodies.

The Central Committee received the report of the General Secretary with appreciation.

- b) The GS Committee received with appreciation the Moderator's overall review of the work done by the Council since its last meeting, and his reflections on ethnicity today.

Noting that several points made in his discussion of ethnicity have immediate relevance to continuing studies on ethnicity, nationalism and the Programme to Overcome Violence, it commended the report especially to Unit III, but also to Units I and II.

The Central Committee received the Moderator's Report with gratitude and commended the contents of the report to the Units, especially Unit III, for follow-up as appropriate.

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MODERATOR AND PRESENTATION ON THE FINANCIAL SITUATION

Dr Nababan invited Ms Birgitta Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Committee, to give her preliminary report.

Ms Rantakari indicated that this report came after the first meeting of the Finance Committee, which would continue its sessions for as long as was needed to complete its business. She referred to the reports of the Moderator and the General Secretary who had already given their overview of the current financial situation of the Council, noting that Central Committee members had begun to articulate their response and address the underlying questions which link the present budget dilemma to the future understanding and shape of the WCC and its relationship to the ecumenical movement. Many came from churches that were facing similar financial situations. Larger global factors were influencing these developments, but the most crucial element in our shared commitment was our shared commitment to be a fellowship of churches.

This session was intended to provide factual information, as well as the Finance Committee's assessment of the situation. Staff had gone through a difficult process in their attempts to bring the budget into balance; everything possible had been done to make reductions within given policies and mandates established by Central Committee. Further steps were dependent upon Central Committee.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms Rantakari expressed gratitude to staff for whom the last few months had been extremely painful, yet they had been diligent and faithful in carrying out their work and enabling the work of the Finance Committee.

Mr John Irwin, chief accountant, introduced the Financial Report and Accounts for 1995. He gave an overview on four main areas, noting that further information would be available at the Finance Hearing the next day:

1) the drawdown on activities funds: reduced by a total of CHF 17.4 million, representing the result of a deliberate policy to reduce activity funds balances in accordance with the wishes of donors (i.e. the use of funds for the purposes for which they were given). Activities must be self-balancing. The reduced balances did not threaten the ability of WCC as a whole to function;

2) the deficit on undesignated income (UDI - membership contributions and other unrestricted funds given to finance WCC's core activities). In 1995 this income was CHF 6.3 million, but demands on it totalled CHF 8.5 million. A negative balance on UDI of CHF 4.4 million was carried forward to 1996;

3) the deficit on General Funds (operating budget), on which there was a deficit of CHF 5.5 million.

The total deficit on 2) and 3) was CHF 7.7 million. Centrally held balances amounting to CHF 3.6 million were reaching minimal levels, therefore a balanced budget for 1997 must be achieved;

4) the bank overdraft: this was a deliberate policy carried out on the advice of the Council's bankers, and had been significantly reduced.

Mr Günter Rath, director of the Office for Income Coordination and Development (OICD) gave an analysis of declining income trends over recent years, and spoke of efforts to find new sources of income. Insufficient funds to finance basic infrastructure costs were being received, and a target of CHF 10 million UDI had been set, to be reached before the Assembly.

He mentioned a number of reasons for the decline in General income; activities income was also down because programmes had been transferred. Investment income was no longer contributing to income because reserve funds had reached minimum levels.

96.8% of income came from 10 countries. Some 10 major churches or donor agencies contributed about 85% of the WCC's total income.

Rev. Michael Davies reported on the situation for 1996 thus far: the first half-year showed expenditure below budget, helped by the stabilised currency situation. The Finance Sub-committee meeting in March 1996 had asked for a 10% reduction in expenditure, but it would take time to implement savings on the operating budget and for these to have an effect on figures.

Member churches had been requested to contribute to the costs of the staff separation fund, which in 1996 would amount to CHF 1.6 million (the balance to be amortised over 5 years). CHF 416,000 had been received to date from five contributors.

He emphasised that the Assembly Fund was quite separate from other funds, and pledges and contributions were coming in as normal.

Ms Rantakari reminded Central Committee that every year since Canberra it had asked for a balanced budget. One year ago, the Finance Committee had begun to realise the seriousness of the situation. In approving the 1996 budget with a deficit, instructions were given that this be reduced or eliminated. Two steps with long-range implications were requested: 1) that a 3-year strategic plan be prepared for the period up to the Eighth Assembly; 2) that the resourcing of the WCC be taken seriously into account by those responsible for the CUV process looking to the future shape of the WCC. These recommendations were now even more urgent. In spite of serious efforts to address the financial situation, including reductions in staff, a deficit was projected for 1996, and for 1997 a deficit of CHF 1.3 million.

Action would be required of Central Committee at this meeting; clear programmatic policy directions must be set with regard to what the Council could and could not do, since present resources were not sufficient to sustain all current staff and programmes. Thus it was important for Central Committee to be aware that the crisis was very real, with complex underlying factors revealing the need for improvement in the structures, financial systems and decision-making processes.

Any proposals regarding new sources of income, and new working styles that would help develop a more flexible and financially viable Council would be welcomed.

The steps to be taken in the next two years would be painful, as much would have to be reorganised or even dismantled in order to prepare the way for the future. It was necessary to clarify what was most basic to WCC, and to begin thinking and acting in ways which would make the future as "one household" a reality.

Discussion

Mr Ulutui noted that financial problems were not new to the WCC - they had recurred at intervals over the years. It appeared that the difficulties were due mainly to the lack of support from member churches, and he felt it was their responsibility to respond urgently to the situation - it was part of the task of fulfilling their task as member churches. He believed in the need for commitment and dedication to God, offering their service to the WCC and through financial contributions for the future work of the Council. He was concerned that cutting down programme activities would affect the WCC's ecumenical service to others, and that the fear of possible redundancy would affect staff.

Dr Love saw the intersection of the vision process and the financial crisis as

an opportunity for the Council to move forward in a way that it had not been willing to do in the past. For a long time there had been a need to define and project a clearer profile to the constituency and to the world, and now there was no choice but to do so. In practical terms, she felt that someone - perhaps a small group was envisaged? - should be in a position to look at the larger picture. If this was intended, she would be glad to hear about it. In any case action should be taken before the assembly.

Bishop Browning asked that ideas being discussed by the Finance Committee be shared also with Central Committee so that members could begin to think about them rather than receiving them only at the point of decision.

Mrs Seddoh, as a representative of a church in the South, urged others from the South to see that the time had come for them to ensure that their churches did fulfil their responsibility towards the Council and to make their financial contribution, which many had not done. She was aware that the economic situation was difficult everywhere, nevertheless the life of the Council depended on the contributions of the churches.

Bishop Rogerson referred to the directive to Units to reduce their expenditure by 10% in 1996, and asked whether some guidance could be given regarding overall priorities for the Council as a whole. Otherwise he feared there would be a danger of losing staff with specific skills, only to find that such skills were needed elsewhere in the Council.

Dr Miller asked whether the priorities and changes being called for were in fact the primary issue, or whether the moves proposed were driven solely by financial considerations. He believed the vision should be the driving force, but what could be done to ensure this? Secondly, he was concerned about the effects of redundancies and cutbacks upon staff, and asked what was being done to counsel them in the kind of anxieties they must be facing.

Dr Crow saw this crisis as an opportunity for Central Committee to be creative, but warned that there could be negative reactions among the member churches. He felt it was essential to involve the churches in this conversation, and urged Central Committee members to keep in mind a sense of where the churches are in their own struggle for faithfulness and for the unity of church. The US churches were also in crisis - not only financial, but a crisis of faith and identity - with denominationalism on the increase. It was imperative to get to the heart of the crisis, and that heart was not finances. But how could the WCC change its nature unless the member communions change the nature of their commitment to the ecumenical vision?

Mr Allsop detected some confusion among members of Central Committee about the two different levels under discussion. In the short-term there were financial constraints and management decisions had to be made which were different from the policy decisions of Central Committee and the assembly. The former must be made by management, accountable through reporting to Central Committee, enabling management to happen in the short-term, as we work towards the longer-term restructuring and re-visioning which would take us into the future and were for decision by the assembly.

Responding, Ms Rantakari expressed appreciation for the comments made which showed the willingness of Central Committee to try together to solve the problems. The Finance Committee was indeed trying to define what had to be done immediately and what could be done in the medium term. It was clear that the present decision-making processes were too complex and needed revision. The main effort was focused on how, with more limited resources, to meet the expectations and do what was most important.

She assured those concerned about staff redundancies that the terms had been agreed in careful consultation with the Staff Representative Group and were deemed satisfactory.

In response to Dr Love, the General Secretary said the Executive Committee had felt that, rather than establishing another structure committee, it should itself assume responsibility for seeing through the CUV process. It had therefore appointed a sub-group from among its members (see p.61), who, together with the Finance Strategy Group of the Executive, would attempt to bring together the different strands regarding the CUV process coming out of discussions in the course of this Central Committee meeting. It was hoped that in 1997 the Central Committee would be in a position to agree on a framework of priorities with which to approach the assembly, as this could clearly not be done on the basis of the present structure.

PUBLIC ISSUES

Dr Nababan, presiding, invited Dr Aaron Tolen, Moderator of the Public Issues Committee (PIC) to present the first report.

Draft statements had been prepared regarding the situation in **Burundi**; the Intensified U.S. Sanctions against **Cuba** and their Assertion of Extra-territoriality; and a draft Minute on U.S. Attacks on **Iraq**. A number of comments and suggested amendments were made to the PIC, in particular on the draft minute on Iraq.

The General Secretary explained the intention behind the **Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs**: in the period since Canberra, the Central Committee had touched on a number of underlying problems which it had not had time to address adequately. This Note was an attempt to highlight some of these problems which were likely to go on influencing the international situation in the coming years. The approach of an assembly presented an appropriate moment to try to identify these issues and enable the Council at the assembly to make a witness that is more than an immediate response to a crisis.

Central Committee members were invited to study the paper and see whether it corresponded to their understanding of these underlying issues; secondly they were asked to give advice on the most appropriate way of handling the process so that the views of member churches could also be sought.

Discussion

Dr Page was concerned that there was no reference to mission in the paper; surely it was part of the churches' function to include mission, education and health, as well as the gospel and cultures process?

Dr Kässmann referred to the booklet *The Role of the Churches in International Affairs* approved by Central Committee at Buenos Aires in 1985, and wondered whether this might be taken up again in this context. What was the specific task of the WCC in international affairs - what could it say in a situation where the churches could not speak because they were bound by national or regional limitations?

In the draft minute on Iraq, Ms Westra agreed that the reaction of the U.S. was out of proportion and indefensible, but she felt there should also be some mention of the Kurds. Dr Tolen pointed out that the distinction between the

people of Iraq and the Kurds was not easy: those in the north were still part of the Iraqi people.

Mr Habib commented that not only the U.S. but other countries, including Turkey, had improperly violated Iraq's territorial integrity. The Moderator said there was a distinction to be drawn between the continuing Turkish presence in Iraq and the recent U.S. attacks which were of a different character, to which this draft addressed itself.

Fr Chaplin mentioned the need for CCIA to give more attention to religious freedom and inter-ethnic conflicts. He asked what the implications of restructuring would be for these and other concerns mentioned in the by-laws of CCIA. If the WCC were to cooperate more with other organisations and agencies aside from member churches, would this mean the loss of the Council's identity in the field of international affairs?

Mr Kirov noted the suggestions being made in Turkey that the government convert the ancient St Sophia Church in Istanbul once again into a mosque. He asked that the Public Issues Committee look into the matter.

Mr Rüegger was impressed by the number of basic questions regarding the role of the churches in international affairs which remained unresolved and he was glad that they were being brought to the fore. Much more clarification would be needed before a commonly agreed basis for ecumenical action could be reached. Secondly, he asked whether there was a set of criteria for interventions such as those in the list of statements/messages by the general secretary since the last meeting. Why were some areas of conflict not mentioned at all?

Responding, Mr Epps said that a set of criteria had been adopted by Central Committee in 1985 on the question of when the WCC might properly speak on a particular concern; these were included in the booklet already referred to entitled *The Role of the Churches in International Affairs* which the Executive Committee had suggested should be updated.

With regard to a situation such as Chechenya, the WCC seeks to work through the member church(es) directly concerned - in this case, the Russian Orthodox Church, which has been actively engaged since the beginning of the war in seeking a negotiated solution through dialogue with Muslim counterparts in Chechenya. The WCC had assisted in Chechenya through agencies involved in the provision of humanitarian aid, but had not spoken publicly. This was one of the reasons for posing the questions in the paper under

discussion: how should the Council proceed in situations of this kind which are on the edge of what it has traditionally used for criteria for speaking publicly on a particular situation?

The Moderator expressed appreciation for this initiative taken by CCIA, seeing it as the beginning of an intensive discussion not only in the Council but with member churches. It was an invitation to engage the churches in a process of reflecting on contemporary issues and their specific role vis à vis these issues. The paper would help the churches embark on this process.

Ms Gcabashe called attention to the situation in **Nigeria**, and asked whether the Nigerian Government had responded to the WCC's letter asking for clemency in the cases of Ken Saro-Wiwa and his co-defendants. Dr Tolen said that no response had been received.

Mr Elisa Mbugo spoke about the worsening situation in **Sudan**. The civil war had caused enormous suffering and loss of life, and there were three-and-a-half million refugees. The churches and the WCC had made every effort to resolve the crisis in 1972 and a great deal was being done now to help. He urged that a joint attempt be made by the WCC, the AACC and the local churches in Sudan to try once again to seek a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict.

Mr John (CCIA staff) responded that the matter was of great concern to the Council. In 1994 Units III and IV had convened a consultation of church leaders, AACC, partners in Europe and the U.S., to see how ecumenical efforts in Sudan could be coordinated. An ecumenical forum was set up which had met regularly since then, and a framework paper for peace and advocacy had served as the base for continuing work. A meeting of church leaders from North and South Sudan plus representatives of AACC and other partners would take place in Geneva immediately following this Central Committee meeting to seek new ways of united action for peace.

Bishop Anderson wished to put on record the fact that **African American churches** and majority churches with African American members in the United States had been consistently violated during recent months. 120 churches had been attacked by illegal burnings, which had been the cause of great consternation and grief among U.S. citizens. Both the President and Congress had addressed the problem.

The debate as to whether these fires were the result of a conspiracy had been proven in at least one incident where the accused admitted complicity.

Certainly, racism was the motive in most cases. The churches affected and those member churches in the U.S. committed to the eradication of racism and the restoration of churches would be helped by a statement of encouragement and a sign of solidarity from the WCC.

A second session on Public Issues took place on 18 September, Dr Nababan presiding. He invited Dr Tolen to give his report.

Dr Tolen reported that the Public Issues Committee had taken note of the comments made in the earlier session:

With regard to Bishop Anderson's account of the burning of black churches in the U.S., Dr Tolen reminded participants that the WCC, in cooperation with the NCCCUSA, had conducted a series of Hearings on Racism as a Violation of Human Rights, the results of which were reported to the UN Human Rights Commission in 1995. The Hearings, in which he himself had participated, confirmed what Bishop Anderson said about the endemic character of racism in the U.S. and its impact on society. The WCC was following the situation closely together with member churches and the NCCCUSA.

The PIC had also discussed the overall situation in the Middle East. While it did not consider it timely for the WCC to make a statement at this point, he gave assurance that events there were under constant review in the WCC and in the MECC and the member churches in the region.

Dr Tolen then presented the revised texts of the proposed statements. With some amendments, they were adopted as follows:

1. STATEMENT ON BURUNDI

Background

The situation in Burundi has steadily deteriorated following the October 1993 assassination of President Melchior Ndadaye. An estimated 100,000 people have been killed during the last three years as a result of violence between the majority Hutus and the Tutsi minority that dominates the army. Due to the conflict over 200,000 refugees from Burundi have sought shelter in Zaire and Tanzania. In Burundi itself over 200,000 people have been internally displaced. The cycle of violence continues unabated making the future of the people of Burundi insecure and uncertain.

The ongoing conflict has led to the breakdown of civil administration and justice system in the country. During the last three years Burundi has experienced virtual anarchy. The erosion of the power and authority of the State has made it possible for the perpetrators of grave and serious human rights violations to carry on their acts with complete impunity. The July 1996 massacre of over three hundred civilians, mostly women, children and the aged, at Camp Bugendana in the Gitega region was one in a series of such killings that have become a matter of routine.

The military coup d'état that took place in the wake of the Camp Bugendana massacre has seriously jeopardised the efforts to restore peace in the country by the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the East African Heads of State, and the former Tanzanian President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. However, the widespread condemnation of the Coup, the refusal to recognize the military regime of President Pierre Buyoya, and the imposition of sanctions by neighbouring states are indications that the African countries and the international community are no longer prepared to remain silent spectators to the ghastly events in Burundi.

The World Council of Churches together with the All Africa Conference of Churches since the beginning of the present crisis in 1993 have continued to monitor the events and have accompanied the churches as they have passed through this turbulent period, undertaking pastoral visits, holding meetings and consultations with the leadership of the churches in Burundi. The member churches have sought to provide humanitarian relief assistance to the victims of the conflict, initially through Church World Action-Burundi, and subsequently through Action of Churches Together (ACT).

The developments in Burundi are a challenge to the churches. They negate the basis of our Christian faith and experience. The Gospel of our Lord teaches that life should be nourished and defended against the forces of darkness and death.

Accordingly, the Central Committee meeting in Geneva, September 1996:

offers its profound condolences to the Roman Catholic faithful of Burundi, and laments with them the tragic assassination of Archbishop Joachim Ruhuna on the eve of its meeting;

condemns the continued use of violence by the armed groups and the military in Burundi to destroy innocent civilian life and property in the country;

deplores the military coup staged by the Burundian army that has jeopardized the fragile peace process initiated by the regional governments;

calls upon the military leadership to take immediate steps to reestablish constitutional rule, accept the Declaration of Principles of Mwanza I, and agree to a framework of negotiations that includes all parties;

congratulates the OAU and the Coalition of African States in and around the Great Lakes region for their precedent setting action to restore democratic rule in Burundi, and calls upon to them to ensure that, in the context of international efforts to bring peace to Burundi, aid agencies, both UN-related and private, will have access to humanitarian relief supplies and essential commodities in order to care for the victims of the conflict and protect human rights;

commends and supports the peacemaking efforts of the former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, and urges the governments of the region as well as those outside to provide political support and resources for his efforts;

appeals to the United Nations Security Council, the Organization of African Unity and the East African Heads of States to continue their efforts to provide protection to the people of Burundi; and

assures the churches of Burundi of its prayers and support in the trials of these days and in their efforts to become faithful witnesses for peace in their society.

2. STATEMENT ON THE INTENSIFIED U.S. SANCTIONS AGAINST CUBA AND THEIR ASSERTION OF EXTRA-TERRITORIALITY

The recent approval by the President of the U.S.A. of new legislation, known as the "Helms-Burton" Amendment, aggravates dramatically the effects of the unilateral economic embargo on the Cuban people. Its provisions which penalize third party nations for pursuing trade with

Cuba have been condemned by Canada and the European Union, and widely rejected by the religious and political leaders of the Caribbean and Latin American region.

The WCC, has repeatedly joined with the Cuban churches, the Caribbean Conference of Churches, the Latin American Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. in denouncing earlier sanctions imposed on Cuba.

In the light of this new escalation and the terrible impact it will have on the Cuban people, its impact on third parties and implications for international trade law, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva, September 1996:

condemns this new act of economic aggression against the people of Cuba;

notes that this unilateral application of sanctions violates the criteria on the effectiveness and applicability of sanctions adopted by the Central Committee in 1995;

expresses its deep concern about the infringements of international laws and trade agreements by the United States of America as a result of the enactment of this legislation;

calls upon the President of the United States and the U.S. Government not to apply the measures called for by the "Helms-Burton" Amendment, and upon it and the Government of Cuba to resolve their differences through negotiation and dialogue.

3. MINUTE ON U.S. ATTACKS ON IRAQ

The Central Committee

- *acknowledges* with appreciation the "Statement of Concern" issued during this meeting by leaders of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. participating in this Central Committee;

- *welcomes* the attention drawn in that statement to the terrible suffering of the Iraqi people at this moment, in no small part due to the impact of the economic sanctions imposed on that country, and draws attention once again to the criteria on sanctions the Central Committee adopted

in 1995, which said that

sanctions are by definition coercive and .. they often inflict additional suffering on affected populations, particularly the most innocent, for example, children;

- *expresses appreciation* to the Middle East Council of Churches for its efforts on behalf of the worldwide ecumenical movement to bring humanitarian aid to all the people of Iraq;
- *calls on* all nations to respect the territorial integrity of Iraq; and
- *commends* the comment issued to the press by the World Council of Churches on 4 September:

The World Council of Churches is deeply concerned about the successive missile attacks undertaken by the United States of America on targets in Iraq during the past 48 hours. They are indefensible on moral grounds, questionable in terms of international law, and establish dangerous new precedents for the use of arms of war by an external power to enforce compliance of another state with established international norms of behaviour and resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. We fervently hope that the United States will not pursue these actions.

Iraq's violations of Security Council decisions cannot be condoned, but the appropriate response to these violations should not be determined by a single power in selective consultation with other governments. It is the responsibility of the Security Council to consider in open debate how to respond.

The World Council of Churches has repeatedly condemned the use of armed force in international relations. It is therefore our hope that this matter will be brought back to the appropriate forum for debate, and that the means of negotiation and non-violent forms of pressure will be used to obtain compliance.

4. NOTE ON THE CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Public Issues Committee recommended

1. that Central Committee receive with appreciation and commend the *Note on the Contemporary Role of the Church in International Affairs*, as amended, (see Appendix IV) to the member churches for further discussion and reflection as part of their preparation for the Eighth Assembly;
2. that the General Secretary send this document to the member churches with a covering letter which would:
 - recall that the mission of the Church and its role in international affairs are intimately related, and that the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) was a joint creation (in 1946) of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches (in process of formation);
 - recall that the divisions which persist among the churches hinder their common witness and the credibility of their affirmations on international affairs.

The Committee further recommended

3. that the document, *The Role of the WCC in International Affairs* be included in the same mailing for information, review and comment.

This document was commended to the churches by Central Committee in 1985 as a means of explaining "the rationale and theological basis for involvement in international affairs, the procedures and forms of action, and the implications of such involvement for the fellowship and unity of the churches."

The Executive Committee which met immediately before this Central Committee meeting asked that this document be updated, as required, and presented to the Central Committee in 1997.

The Central Committee agreed.

Dr Kässmann was not satisfied with the way the Council dealt with the question of sanctions, in spite of the text adopted by Central Committee in 1995. She hoped that with the establishment of the Programme to Overcome Violence there would be more possibility to deal substantially with the issues involved.

The General Secretary referred to two further matters of grave concern to members of Central Committee:

a) Some members of Central Committee had hoped that something might be said about the situation in Nigeria. The WCC had been involved in several initiatives, including a visit which had succeeded in obtaining first-hand evidence on the situation in Ogoniland. In follow up to this and other visits, a consultation had been called for November 1996 with church partners and agencies involved in Nigeria to determine a strategy and agree a common approach. He assured Central Committee that the situation would continue to receive the Council's close attention.

Bishop Omoyajowo expressed appreciation for this assurance, since there was some disappointment that the matter had not come to the PIC. He underlined the seriousness of the situation in his country, where no aspect of life had remained unaffected. The UN had sent a delegation to look into the human rights situation but its report simply stated what the government wanted, rather than informing the world of what was really happening in Nigeria. He urged the WCC to do everything possible to assist the people of Nigeria, since there was little they could do themselves because they are in constant danger.

Bishop Boseto spoke about the continuing human rights violations in Bougainville in spite of the decision that the government should no longer maintain a blockade but seek ways to resolve the problems. Mr Epps was grateful for the up-to-date information on this continuing tragic conflict, and assured the Bishop that the Council would continue to follow this situation closely.

Concluding the session, Dr Tolen reminded Central Committee of the procedures relating to public issues, and urged that any concerns that members wished the PIC to deal with should in future be brought to their attention at the beginning of a meeting so that the necessary time could be devoted by the PIC to discussing the matter and, where appropriate, to prepare a statement or minute.

The Central Committee received the report of the Public Issues Committee with appreciation.

DELIBERATIVE PLENARY SESSIONS

I. ECCLESIOLOGY AND ETHICS

Dr Aaron Tolen moderated the session. In his introduction he reminded participants that the Central Committee meeting in 1995 had asked that the results of the Ecclesiology and Ethics study process be brought to it in 1996 in a joint plenary presentation by Unit I - Unity and Renewal, and Unit III - Justice, Peace and Creation. A document (C.3 - available on request) on "The Study Process on Ecclesiology and Ethics, 1992-1996" was circulated. Two basic questions were currently being posed to the churches worldwide:

- How can we practise an ecumenical moral formation - a common training for Christian ethical discernment and decision-making - in our own local situation?
- What are the implications of this local ecumenical ethical engagement for our global koinonia?

Prof. Anne-Marie Aagaard outlined the Ecclesiology and Ethics study process which had been mandated after Seoul and Canberra, and which was intended to find the points of convergence of the historical Faith and Order and Life and Work areas of ecumenical involvement. The study process was envisaged as a short three-step process; it was not intended to arrive at consensus on specific moral issues, but rather to work towards a more basic aim: to articulate that "being" (ecclesial) and "doing" (ethics) of the church cannot be separated. It was also intended to assist churches in reflecting on, and responding to, moral issues.

Three consultations had been held thus far in the Ecclesiology and Ethics study process, each resulting in a report in booklet form or a document: *Costly Unity* (1993); *Costly Commitment* (1995); and *Costly Obedience — Towards an ecumenical communion of moral witnessing* (unpublished).

Dialogue on moral matters has to include questions of Faith and Order, which will lead to a unified witness and common training for ethical decision-making. What implications come from local ethical engagement for global witnessing?

Rev. Gordon Gray, a Presbyterian minister in Lisburn, Northern Ireland, presented a series of slides with spoken commentary on the present situation there. The churches were caught up in the conflict while attempting to resolve the differences, and efforts to speak with one voice were not always successful. The Irish problem was essentially political - about identity and nationality - rather than about religion. The churches have become captive to their own traditions, subject to their members' prejudices and fears. Culture shapes religion rather than being transformed by it. Barriers of culture, politics and historic attitudes too often proved stronger to divide than ecumenical relations to unite.

Dr Dolores Williams, Professor of Theology at Union Seminary, New York, spoke about violence against women as an ethical issue for the churches. She believed that the Christian Church was called to support the life of each of its members. In the early history of the Church, women were involved in spreading the gospel and were active members of Christian communities. According to St Paul: "If one member of the body suffers, all suffer". The church must therefore be in opposition to all forms of violence against human beings, against nature and the environment. The church should be a place of justice, caring, peace and love, reflecting the life of the spirit, and speak out against behaviour such as violence against women. Abused women and men who inflict violence must experience the healing power of the church.

Ms Virginia Gcabashe reported that the team visits - "Living Letters" - organised in connection with the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women, including nearly every member church, had revealed how extensive the issue of violence against women was in today's world. She also noted liturgical exclusion of women as an issue which the churches must deal with.

Bishop John Neill read part of the interim report from the readers of the Decade team visit reports, which disclosed that some church leaders had been involved in domestic violence, and some churches have remained in conspiratorial silence about violence against women. Three types of violence against women were highlighted: physical, symbolic/psychological and economic/institutional. Women seldom feel able to turn to churches for support.

Ms Gcabashe mentioned several meetings dealing with violence that had taken place in various regions over the course of the last few years. It was not easy for women to speak out about their victimisation, but it was important for them to do so in order to transform pain into political power and action.

Rev. Elizabeth Welch read part of the Ballycastle (Ireland) declaration: a

poem highlighting the search for a world of non-violent relationships. Rev. Valamotu Palu read a poem from the Pacific regional meeting in Samoa.

Ms Maryssa Mapanao reported from the Asia regional meeting, noting that in Asia poverty has a woman's face, but that women had expressed their hope to be able to bring their gifts to a renewed community. Dr Williams ended by stating that churches must face up to violence against women and the fragmentation of the community of women and men.

Prof. John de Gruchy, Professor of Theology at the University of Cape Town, was interviewed by WCC press officer John Newbury, who asked him about the South African churches' struggle against apartheid in relation to the premise that ecclesiology is what the church *is*, and ethics is what it *does*.

Prof. de Gruchy responded that the churches, with some exceptions, had discovered their unity in the body of Christ in a way that had not been true before. There was a realisation that the gospel demanded that the church stand for justice and human rights within its own context. In their unity, they found an understanding of the ethical implications of the gospel, including the struggle against racism, and these could not be separated from the unity of the church. He believed that the churches had a genuine experience of unity, but because they were engaged so deeply in the struggle against apartheid, they did not deal with theological issues - and these began to re-emerge after that struggle had ended, with denominationalism coming to the fore again.

But the struggle was continuing: the churches were involved in the process of dealing with the past, and have an important role to play in relation to the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in terms of forgiveness and reparation and enabling people to see the link between justice and reconciliation.

Responding to a question about moral formation, Prof. de Gruchy believed that this begins with baptism through the whole process of forming of a person within the community of faith, shaping that person as a Christian in terms of an understanding of the biblical message. The liturgical life and witness of the church contributes to the formation of the people. Liturgy is the on-going life of the church and shapes Christian identity.

A brief time was given for discussion in small groups, then the floor was opened for comments.

Ms Nontawasee mentioned the traditional conflict between culture and gospel in her region, and wondered how the church could respond to that.

Dr Mac Charles Jones noted the divisions between theological formulations of moral formation and the concrete expressions in daily life in local contexts. How can spirituality and spiritual understanding be nourished in our communities?

In response to a question from Fr Chaplin on the issue of Christian and non-Christian ethics, Gordon Gray noted that after a certain growth of common understanding between Catholic and Protestant Christians in Ireland, they had begun to attempt to relate also to those who had rejected both Christian traditions. All could share the same human values of justice, peace and respect for the neighbour, without compromising their own faith, and were seeking to build community with respect and dignity.

Dr Aaron Tolen closed the session by repeating the two questions he had posed at the beginning, inviting participants to take these questions back to their churches for further discussion.

II. THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS AND THE CHURCHES' RESPONSE

Rev. Eunice Santana introduced the session. At its meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1994, the Central Committee mandated a study on HIV/AIDS the results of which were to be shared with the churches to help local congregations meet the challenge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A Consultative Group was set up to guide the study, comprised of Central Committee member Dr Ruth Page; Unit II Commission Moderator Dr Sigrun Mogedal; Dr T. Jacob John of the Syrian Orthodox Church of India; Dr Christoph Benn of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) and Mr Simon Moglia of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Current statistics on the spread of the disease were given by Dr John, and a video was shown to illustrate how a local church in Thailand participates in the work of prevention and care for HIV/AIDS affected persons.

Dr John reported that some 28 million people worldwide would be infected with the virus by mid-1996, with new infections occurring at the rate of ca. 7,000 each day, including 1,400 babies born with the virus. Approximately 6 million people have already died of the disease. 94% of the infections occur in developing countries; 19 million cases are estimated in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, where the disease is spreading rapidly. Cases among the homosexual population are steadily decreasing and now represent only about 10% of the total number of those infected. Drug use and transfusion of

infected blood are other modes of transmission in addition to unprotected sexual contact. The disease is nearly always fatal, and as yet there is no cure nor any preventive vaccine against the HIV/AIDS virus.

Treatment to prolong life is prohibitively costly and outside the reach of most patients in the developing countries. Dr John underlined the incomprehensible suffering of those who develop the disease. Often, the most one can do to help the afflicted is to "love them, comfort them, touch them, be with them until they die".

The statement proposed for adoption by Central Committee, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS and the Churches' Response* (see Appendix III), was presented by Dr Benn. The Consultative Group, composed of persons of different cultural backgrounds, had dealt with questions such as attitudes toward sexuality, gender inequality, economic oppression. These aspects were discussed in a spirit of mutual trust and sharing, resulting in spiritual growth and an experience of ecumenical learning for those involved. The intention of the study was not to produce a consensus statement, but to help those affected, their friends and families, by making possible effective pastoral care and encouragement. Those affected were waiting for a clear and bold statement from the churches. The study is also intended to help churches use their moral authority, credibility and resources to become parties in the struggle - to provide a "safe place" for those who are suffering.

The group was to explore the theological and ethical issues raised by HIV/AIDS. Human beings are created good, and their sexuality is part of the goodness of creation. It is expressed through relationships. Sexuality cannot be reduced to its physical aspects, but is multi-dimensional and related to human emotions, spirituality and social interaction. Sin is a distortion of relationships. While human beings might find the highest level of fulfilment and love in sexual relationships, they are also a source of potential distortions and deep vulnerability.

The Consultative Group affirmed that the churches have recognized marriage as the primary place for the expression of sexuality in its various dimensions. However, the group maintained that rejection and discrimination of other forms of sexual relationship does not lead to responsible behaviour built on mutual trust and love. All too often, churches have excluded people living with HIV/AIDS contributing to their discrimination, misinformation and fear. But churches and Christians have also been among the first to try innovative approaches in care and prevention, to provide counselling and pastoral services and to alleviate the social and economic consequences of HIV/AIDS.

The pandemic exposes any complacency and complicity of the churches, challenging them to be better informed, more active, and more faithful witnesses to the gospel of reconciliation in their own lives and in their communities.

Dr Benn alluded to the life and death of Ernesto Cardoso, a member of the consultative group and liturgist who had worked with CLAI. His experience of the disease had illuminated the study and deeply touched all who knew him. The HIV/AIDS study document would, it was hoped, become a catalyst for change.

The study challenged the churches to be what they are supposed to be - a caring community for those in greatest need. The churches are urged to facilitate the use of the study document and the planned educational guide which is to help churches and communities to become involved in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

In the ensuing discussion, Metropolitan Kirill pointed to Orthodox teachings on personal worthiness and sinfulness, emphasizing the importance of personal ethics. He wondered why, in an earlier plenary on ecclesiology and ethics, this aspect seemed to have been ignored. Sexual weakness is not due only to social conditions but to personal irresponsibility; sex tourism to third world countries being only one example. The WCC and the churches must speak out strongly to affirm this aspect of the question.

Ms Tungane Williams expressed appreciation for the study document and the statement. HIV/AIDS had not yet reached the islands of the Pacific, but preventive work had already begun there thanks to a conference organized by staff of Unit II in 1994.

Ms Vidhya Rani urged churches to open their facilities and provide counselling and care to persons affected by HIV/AIDS. Ms Prakai Nontawasee hoped the study would be considered as a common call to Christians and non-Christians to work in solidarity in the healing ministry.

Rev. David Gill commended the study and asked whether the churches had earned the right to wear the red ribbon that symbolizes solidarity with HIV/AIDS sufferers. Dr Krusche reported the recent loss of two missionaries of his church to this disease and urged that churches and Christians refrain from stigmatizing HIV/AIDS affected persons. In a changing and pluralistic society it is important to underline responsible behaviour while recognizing that it is sometimes difficult to adhere to this norm.

Rev. Angelique Walker-Smith asked that the document be widely circulated, but requested mention of the innocent babies who were born with the disease or orphaned at an early age. She cautioned against stereotyping of people of colour as primary carriers of the virus.

Dr Anne Tveter commended the paper, but requested that more emphasis be given to the situation and vulnerability of women, relegated to a lower social status in many societies. Ms Faith Mwondha also commended the report but urged that special mention be made of the girl child who is especially vulnerable in societies where they are considered inferior and have little access to education. Churches might then find practical ways to improve the lives of girl children.

Dr Eugene Turner commented that many churches in the US refuse pastoral care to HIV/AIDS sufferers. The theological arguments in the paper might help churches to exercise their responsibility for assuring and proclaiming God's grace for all.

Rev. Hector Mendez expressed appreciation for the document and called on churches to accept responsibility for dealing with all the issues linked with HIV/AIDS. Mr Moglia said the youth were not accompanied by the churches as they attempted to face the HIV/AIDS challenge.

In her response to some of the interventions, Dr Mogedal said that we are all vulnerable in the face of this challenge; we hear the voice of God calling in this moment. If we listen, we may find the courage to admit that we are part of the cause of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Responding to Metropolitan Kirill, she said most churches would have difficulty to consider HIV/AIDS as a punish-ment from God; we need to find a new language to speak about social and corporate responsibility; we must speak about brokenness, vulnerability, relationships and fidelity.

Central Committee members were asked to study the report closely and to decide whether it was the clear and bold statement required by the situation.

The statement of the Consultative Group on HIV/AIDS was sent to the Unit II Committee for action. In a later plenary session it was adopted by the Central Committee as amended (see p.103).

The final report of the Consultative Group on HIV/AIDS was welcomed by Central Committee and commended to the churches for study.

TOWARDS A COMMON UNDERSTANDING AND VISION (CUV) OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

I. Presentation and Discussion

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram I, opened the session, noting that CUV was an important process of reflection and action in the life of the WCC; ample time had been foreseen to provide opportunity for participants to respond.

Pastor Nellie Ritchie presented a draft document³ that had been circulated to Central Committee members. She then invited four participants to give their viewpoints and open the discussion.

Ms Pryanka Mendis reminded participants that the CUV process had started in 1989 and would lead up to the Assembly. Many changes would take place in the WCC in the period up to 1998 in response to the strained financial situation, and the immediate task was to discern priorities. She wondered whether the document was the dream of the old or of the young, or whether it was the vision of the old for the young. Such a process could only be real if it were owned by the member churches, and she wondered how it was that, after 50 years of prophetic witness and struggle together across denominational frontiers, there was so little response from them?

In light of the Council's basic task of maintaining the fellowship of its member churches, what sprang immediately to mind was the lack of input from young people - the WCC seemed irrelevant to them. Young people were interested in specific programmatic initiatives like the Programme to Combat Racism or the Programme to Overcome Violence. If the Council were serious about including everybody in its common vision, it must seek the guidance of young people also. And many groups striving for freedom and justice remained on the margins, tending to organise themselves outside the church. In order to fortify the identity of the WCC in the area of prophetic witness, it must be realised that partners included not only the member churches, but also NCCs, REOs and grassroots movements.

³ The aim of the process being to revise the document prior to sending it to member churches for study and comment, the text is not included in these minutes. The revised text is available on request.

Pointing to the astonishing changes undergone by the WCC since its foundation, Ms Mendis noted that two-thirds of its member churches now came from the South - perhaps the Council should be located there?

Dr Birgitta Larsson also alluded to the profound changes of the recent past. As the ecumenical movement entered a new millennium and was looking back on 50 years, she wondered if being together ecumenically had developed correspondingly. Was it not time to refocus the vision? What elements of the initial vision were still valid and what had lost focus?

In the early days, unity and mission were linked together and the mission aspect was seen as especially important. How did our common witness look today? The mission aspect seemed to have become weaker, as had the definition of proselytism and respect towards each other. Had the original desire for unity become a stumbling block? The fact that there was still division within the churches over many issues had to be faced honestly.

A deep longing for eucharistic fellowship could be perceived, especially in the chapter on vision. This was a strong concern in Vancouver and remained a challenge to our inequality, injustice and lack of sharing. The place of worship must be clearly manifested in our ecumenical fellowship; the vision must be refocused in order to see what the ecumenical movement must be and do that no other body could do. In the context of the new millennium, the ecumenical movement should be a sign and foretaste of the reign of God. We must refocus our vision on unity and witness, as in the past. How could renewal happen in the churches, and lead to unity?

An example of change within the ecumenical movement was the development of local, national and regional bodies. Was it not obvious that the decline in giving did not so much affect programmes? Electronic communication offered many more possibilities of keeping the fellowship together; there was need for closer relationships to Christian World Communions, for a re-evaluation of parallel structures in order to find out how best to share resources. To refocus meant looking back at the starting point and moving forward in the present context.

Fr Leonid Kishkovsky spoke as an Orthodox and as an American, from his experience within the Orthodox Church and the Christian setting of his country. He felt that the CUV process of thinking was developing along a line of sets of polarities and tensions that needed to be held together. The first of these was the situation of ecumenism today. The achievements of the ecumenical movement were stated and in some cases celebrated. But some

of our differences continued to accompany us, and this deeper tension was not fully expressed. In reality the achievements in the ecumenical movement were considerable and some profound convergences had developed - we could say things together today which we could not have said 50 years ago. Yet there was a polarity gap due to the emergence of new divergences, and the resulting theological and spiritual differences were very profound.

The second set of polarities concerned the essence of the WCC - not so much an organisation as the relationship of churches one to another. On our ecumenical journey we encounter churches and Christians who espouse new ethical values that represent an actual offense as we stand before God and the Gospel: this was the underlying reality.

Another polarisation was that of ecumenical and confessional triumphalism, but neither was faithful to the Gospel. The guideline to follow was a sense of sobriety and realism about where we find ourselves; respect of tradition and critical discernment were important for all churches, based on a common living faith, transmitted in a living way from generation to generation.

In closing Fr Kishkovsky quoted the words of Ignatius of Antioch: "Christ does not lead us into the past, Christ leads us into the future!" All are called to have confidence in God as they continue this ecumenical journey.

Ms Brigalia Bam invited the WCC to move to South Africa - the context out of which she spoke, since it was impossible to represent all churches of Africa.

She found the document quite modest in referring to the achievements of the Council. Dr Visser 't Hooft, first WCC General Secretary, had shown great understanding for South Africa; he used to stress that at its heart the WCC was about relationships and trust. She felt that reference should be made to the astonishing changes that had been brought about, and that the document be more inclusive in its terminology, using the language of the people rather than jargon.

Ms Bam was concerned that the vision might be blurred by the financial crisis, and urged that the two issues be kept separate, otherwise creativity and imagination would be destroyed. She was encouraged that issues of justice were central to the future vision. With the increasing globalisation of economies, there was more need than ever for a body that was committed to the poor and marginalised. During the Apartheid era when the churches of South Africa had a common enemy, they had been strong and united. Now

that this common enemy had gone, the denominations were turning in on themselves. So a central body was very important in the present situation.

It was also important to highlight the fact that we really become the Church when we are ecumenical. Ms Bam felt that the insights of the Community study, the relational aspect of our work, women's issues, and violence against part of humanity, did not come through strongly enough, nor did the feeling that the ecumenical movement was owned by the churches. She affirmed that the WCC and the ecumenical movement were relevant to South Africa today.

The Moderator pointed to two questions to be addressed:

- 1) Who are we as an inter-related fellowship? Are we as churches aware of this inter-relatedness, and what is its nature and meaning?
- 2) What true vocation do the churches and societies derive from this reality of inter-relatedness?

The ensuing discussion was presided by Dr Nababan.

Bishop Koppe asked how the Council should move into the 21st century. How could all the dimensions be included in its vision? In many cases, inter-religious dialogue had not yet begun. The WCC also needed to accompany the thinking of world conferences of the United Nations. Having looked at all the dimensions, a structural question might be: how can the WCC speak on behalf of its member churches?

Mr Birmelé felt that the spiritual dimension of the Council needed strengthening by associating our cultural life with the privileged moments of unity that we experience. The degree of communion reached - even if imperfect - was no small thing. Secondly, concrete steps towards visible unity must be taken. WCC assemblies since New Delhi had made visible the measure of unity achieved thus far, while the Leuenberg, Meissen, and Porvoo Agreements were signs of real progress.

Mr Gill affirmed the broad lines of the document for the future of the WCC, noting that it would also have powerful implications for NCCs and REOs. This Central Committee was expected to offer a courageous sign of hope, and the document provided the substance and direction for this. The WCC was first and foremost the churches on their pilgrimage towards unity. He urged that the vision be formulated in more poetic language, and not couched in the terms normally used by the WCC.

Dr Blei noted that an important process had begun, though he still detected some confusion. On one hand the WCC was seen as the churches together, calling one another into fellowship, while on the other a distinction was made between the WCC and the ecumenical movement. How did these two emphases relate? Was there an ecumenical movement outside the churches, and if so, what did we understand by church? What qualified an organisation to be ecumenical?

Dr Müller-Stöver believed that the language was too technical and the text too long. It seemed biblically inexact to say we were on our way towards a vision because unity is a gift. Describing WCC as an instrument suggested justification through works, as if God were dependent on us, whereas the ecumenical movement builds its vision on the word of God that became flesh.

Mr Farfan-Figueroa pointed out that his church had proposed that a historical overview of the past 50 years be written in order to facilitate the construction of a perspective towards the future. Such an evaluation was necessary for the historical memory of the WCC, and would help to redeem the heritage of the past for the future. There needed to be a connection between the beginning and the end which would illustrate the presence of the WCC in the midst of different situations, where material resources, theological understanding and pastoral care were shared.

Even if the WCC were in a financial crisis, the ecumenical idea was not in any crisis at all, asserted Mr Lodberg; there was no alternative to ecumenism. He felt that the document was honest in its assessment of the present state of unity; it highlighted the dilemmas. Some mention should be made of the fact that the WCC in its theological prophetic sense had moved away from the conservative churches; churches in their ecumenical situation were more bilateral. The people of God in the ecumenical movement were not primarily working on what should unite the churches, so the Council's work may sometimes divide them even more.

Dr Tsetsis felt that the general orientation of the document responded to the appeal in the General Secretary's report and emphasized the primary purpose of the WCC as enabling the churches to call each other into visible unity and eucharistic fellowship. The paragraph on unity in diversity was too vague as it might lead to the impression that the WCC encouraged diversity in faith. Catholicity implied cultural and liturgical diversity of the Church of Christ - not divergence and contradiction. We were seeking unity of faith, unity of love. The WCC clearly stood for more than was expressed here.

Mr Oskam, an adviser on behalf of the ecumenical supporting agencies, stressed that all were partners in the one ecumenical movement. The agencies had a real feeling of partnership and were willing and able to give substantial financial support. But while the document expressed the desire to improve the relationship between the WCC and other partners in the ecumenical movement, no mention was made of the ecumenical agencies in the recommendations. Was there in future no place in the WCC for these agencies?

Dr Granberg-Michaelson believed there was a lack of understanding of what it meant to belong to the one ecumenical movement, and it was urgent for this understanding to be renewed within the churches. This was the moment to refocus the Council's vision of what it meant to be a catalyst for relationships. It was disappointing that the section on important new relationships did not contain the General Secretary's vision of creating a vehicle for gathering together the whole Christian family: it fell short of that vision because it was only centred on the WCC. The Council was not an agency delivering services, but a relational fellowship giving account of diversity - a diversity that might be offensive, but also a gift of the Spirit.

For Ms Santana the document lacked definition. What was meant by the churches striving towards unity? Whose unity? Unity for what? This must be defined first. Did the WCC make a difference to us as churches? What did it mean for the oikumene, for the world that God loved so much that he sent his son to die for it? Self-understanding was not something that remained inside us, because relations with churches and with humankind assumed a similar view of the world with its despair, violence, and increasing fragmentation. What sort of Council was needed for today that would enable us to make a more valid contribution?

Mr Rügger felt the text should state more clearly that the ecumenical movement and the WCC today had become more comprehensive, embracing more internal diversity than was the case 50 years ago. That was not a matter for regret even if it made mutual understanding more difficult. We had to keep in mind that the ecumenical movement was not simply a movement from diversity to ever increasing homogeneity, but a commitment to stay together and learn from one another, even if our divergences remained as real as the convergences reached so far.

While the text spoke of the ecumenical movement as a fellowship of churches of different confessional traditions, it did not mention the extent to which our churches - at least in the West - have themselves undergone a process of internal pluralisation. The divergences within many churches were often more

serious than differences between the traditional theological positions. This was one of the reasons why many people today were no longer interested in supporting ecumenical institutions, which in their opinion tried to overcome differences that had long since ceased to be vital for them.

Prof. Romanides mentioned the question of language and the translations in use in different parts of the world. The Orthodox in North America were using translations made by Protestants and Catholics, which led to problems because they did not have their own. It was important to enter this kind of study rather than using the translations of others.

Barbara Bazett explained that the Society of Friends had not responded to the original document on CUV because its language did not engage attention and the paper seemed irrelevant. The new document was better but the jargon should be removed in order to obtain a clear and simple text.

Mr Moglia stressed the need to focus on the matters of life. The vision being sought was not a vision for the WCC, but for a new heaven and a new earth: this vision did not only concern organisations but also the people in the street. We must be vulnerable not only to one another within the ecumenical movement, but also to the whole creation.

Dr Tolen saw a link in this discussion to the plenary on Ecclesiology and Ethics: the question could not be avoided as to who and what the church is and on what basis it could be defined. When speaking of the WCC and its *raison d'être*, it was important to discern - among all that had been done and that could be affirmed - those things we want to hold on to, even if we had to let go of the rest. This meant looking for unity through the things which witnessed to that unity - everything that promoted, affirmed and sustained life, education and social justice. If there was agreement on these central issues, then we could discern the direction to go forward.

With regard to representation and participation: unless those who were called into this process felt represented and had the right to participate, nothing would be achieved. Even with the mass media and electronic communication of today, the majority of people are excluded. Having defined what was central and clarified the question of participation, the structures and resources needed to do these things could be considered on the basis of the financial possibilities.

Bishop Bue believed that the increased openness of his church was to a large extent due to its membership in the Council. Consequently, the Church of

Norway was very concerned about the direction to be given by this Central Committee on the future of the fellowship. Where was the passion with which our forerunners in the ecumenical movement confronted the scandal of our divisions, and where was the impatience to proclaim the Gospel? In searching for a common understanding and vision, it was imperative to get in touch once again with this passion and "heartbeat" of the ecumenical movement and find what it means for today and tomorrow.

Theological dialogues had brought remarkable agreements, but the WCC was still unclear about its essence. It challenged unjust structures, but churches were still ready to leave one another for the sake of ethnicity, nationalism, pride or fear. The viability of the ecumenical movement would be seen in its ability to proclaim the good news with understanding for the diverse Christian traditions and theological insights, and to call people to faith in Jesus Christ. But what was the specificity that justified the Council's existence and would give focus to its mandate in the next century? It must be to help the churches bring unity, mission and justice together into dynamic interaction in worship, witness and life.

Dr Tanner detected some confusion in the section on the vision. First, there was the vision and understanding of the WCC itself, and the dynamic nature of the fellowship serving the ecumenical movement. Secondly there was the ecumenical vision and sometimes the biblical vision of that unity and reconciled life that we live together and that the Council was to help us live together. It hardly did justice to what had already been said about unity in the context of the Council, which was not said anywhere else: the unity we look for in faith, in eucharistic fellowship, which would send us out from the common table into mission and service and bring back the world around that common table - the conciliar life of the churches, the inclusive community, ecclesiology and ethics, and so on. The Gospel and Culture study admitted the problems about the place of confessions in our vision for unity. The next step would be to show the relation of that vision of reconciled and reconciling life to the vision of the WCC itself, their interrelation, the understanding of the WCC as helping us to take steps towards that reconciled life.

Ms Welch appreciated the strong emphasis on relationships. We were called to reflect in the life of our churches the relationship of love that is the life of the Holy Trinity - which meant living in relationship with one another in a dynamic reality. Secondly, she stressed the importance of the wider relationship among the different ecumenical organisations and the WCC. NCCs and REOs did not in fact make different calls on member churches, but all belonged to the coherence of the common vision.

Metr. Athanasios reiterated Ms Mendis's remarks about the importance of the contribution of young people for our vision. Fundamentalist groups had done a good deal of harm among young people, so it was essential to draw in a new generation with ecumenical experience to continue the work begun.

Ms Rani cautioned that as long as women and young people were left outside ecumenical structures, as was still the case in many churches, the ecumenical movement would never achieve its goals. She did not feel comfortable with the statement that the WCC was a central place - this might risk pushing the Council outside the churches as an independent body. The churches should not rely on the WCC alone for finding a solution to all problems - the fellowship was in their own places. The Council should rather be called a catalyst, networking with its member churches for real unity in diversity.

Prof. Bria felt that the CUV text should be read together with the report of the General Secretary and the paper on ecclesiology and ethics in order to obtain a sound basis for an exegesis. He referred to the way we read and interpret the half-century of our history; the distance covered seemed incomplete and sometimes deficient. Certain fundamental moments must be mentioned such as the process around BEM, which spoke about *common grounds* of ecumenical life. Today we had a common Christology, a proposal for a common sacramental life, a common approach to ecclesiology. The past and the present must be kept together.

While it had been said repeatedly that the Council was a catalyst for relationships, it should be kept in mind that the half-century during which the churches had lived together was not only a period of relationships, but also had its history of discoveries, truths, and witness. In fact, the only apologetic voice defending the truth during the Cold-War period came from the WCC. The Council was the result of a voluntary act of the churches and not part of their essence and nature. The nature and mission of the church must be linked to the nature and mission of the Council. This was an old and complex question and a new dialectic had to be sought in order to reconcile these two natures and essences. The debate on the ecclesial significance of the Council in the 1960s-1970s had been largely forgotten today.

The Moderator invited Rev. Ian Allsop, moderator of the Hearing on CUV to take place later in the programme, to conclude the session.

Mr Allsop reflected on the CUV process thus far. Organisations were living entities with a life of their own, and at their heart they had values and belief systems. The ecumenical movement was in the process of defining its own

identity, values and beliefs which make it what it is. Once a common understanding and vision had been defined and the rest of the process established, the document would be revised and sent to the member churches for study and response. The tasks and functions of what this common understanding and vision implied would then be refined. But because of the immensity of the ecumenical task and of the vision, it might be too easy to move away from the core tasks that emerge from our common understanding. We need to focus on these core understandings and the derivative tasks that emerge and the functions that must be carried out if we are to be faithful to our calling, and there must be an integrity in the process by which we implement the tasks we have defined.

As part of one ecumenical movement, we must have a process that builds on the network of relationships and does not isolate us into separate compartments. In order to facilitate networks of other ecumenical expressions and encourage relations between member churches, we need processes that facilitate, that are open, able to communicate, and that have an integrity about the way our understanding is expressed. If we are one ecumenical movement, then there should be one policy-making group for that one ecumenical movement, in which all are open to listen to one another.

But in moving towards one policy-making body, there can be a diversity of management expression. The danger was that, in the present critical financial situation, we adopt management processes that become institutionalised and then *de facto* become the structure of the future. The difficulty lay not so much in the conception of a new vision but in releasing ourselves from the captivity of the old ways. He urged Central Committee members to be open to developing a structure that would be flexible and adapted to the future.

The session ended with prayer led by Bishop Eberhard Renz.

II. Action by the Central Committee

At a later session, Ms Gcabashe presented the report of the General Secretariat Committee as follows:

The GS Committee discussed the document on Common Understanding and Vision and also received the substance of the discussions in the Unit Committees I, II, IV and a group of Youth.

The notes of the discussion in all five Unit Committees and the Youth

Group would be shared with the CUV staff group, and with the drafting group working on chapters 5 and 6 of the Common Understanding and Vision paper who were to meet in October 1996.

The Committee noted that a sub-group of the Executive Committee would oversee the process to ensure that it moved forward.

Responding to Ms Welch's intervention, the General Secretary drew attention to a document summarising the discussion in the earlier plenary and in the Hearing. Members were invited to study this paper and to put their comments in writing so that these could be taken into account in the further process. In the interests of transparency, he explained the next steps envisaged:

The material in this paper, together with summaries of discussions on CUV in the Unit Committees, would constitute the basis for revising the present draft document. The Executive Committee had named ten persons from among its members to provide oversight of the process as it develops: Prof. Aagaard, Ms Best, Dr Kässmann, Fr Kishkovsky, Ms Mapanao-Camaddo, Ms Rantakari, Ms Santana, Bishop Talbert, Dr Tolen, and Bishop Zacharias.

The October consultation, whose task would be to supplement the present text with two additional chapters, would include the following persons, selected with a view to their contribution on questions of organisation and structure: Fr H. Alfeyev, Rev. I. Allsop, Fr N. Apostola, Rev. T. Arai, Mr B. Kiplagat, Dr B. Larsson, Dr L. Mudge, Ms B. Rantakari. Their draft would be shared also with the sub-group of the Executive who would offer their comments, prior to sending the revised document to member churches for their reactions.

The sub-group of the Executive would meet immediately prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee in February 1997 to review comments received thus far from member churches, REOs, NCCs, CC members, and other partners; they would then advise the Executive on any further steps to be taken. Thus, any comments sent to the General Secretary would be shared with the members of this sub-group.

Ms Best was grateful for this clarification, but was still concerned about how priorities would be established, for example, in relation to the purposes and functions of the WCC. The General Secretary affirmed that this responsibility would be carried by the Executive which participates in the governing authority of Central Committee.

Barbara Bazett referred to the Canberra statement on *Unity as Koinonia*, Gift

and Calling, which encouraged churches where possible to consider appropriate forms of eucharistic hospitality, noting that some churches which do not observe these rites still share in the spiritual experience of life in Christ. She asked that, in consultation with Faith and Order, appropriate wording to this effect be included under the purposes and functions in the revised text.

Bishop Koppe referred to the discussion around the issue of authorising the General Secretary to give attention to developing an alternative programme and management structure. His small group had discussed this and wished to underline the fact that there are many new possibilities for organising management, and consideration should be given as to whether some of these might not be taken up. He hoped that some effort would be made to see what some member churches were already doing in the area of communication.

If the *vision* section was to come at the beginning rather than at the end, Dr Page asked who would put this vision into words in a way that would convey passion and catch people's imagination, as well as attract some response?

Dr Papas was concerned lest the churches fail to respond even to the revised text when it is sent to them. How could Central Committee encourage them to take some action? The General Secretary urged members to do whatever they could to ensure that the appropriate authorities in their churches do respond to the request that would be addressed to them to examine this text.

On behalf of the General Secretariat Committee, Mr Briggs assured the Unit Committees that comments from Units I, II and IV had been received and were included in the recommendations together with material for the group revising the document.

The Central Committee agreed to the following action:

On the basis of its own discussion and discussions in the Unit committees, the General Secretariat Committee recommended that:

recognizing that the document "Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches" represents a helpful contribution to the CUV process, the Central Committee resolved that it be revised in the light of discussions that took place during its meeting; and

that the revised text be sent to the churches to seek their comments and responses, with a view to producing a policy document for presentation to the next meeting of Central Committee.

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

I. Deliberative Session on the Report of Assembly Planning Committee (APC)

Pastor Nelida Ritchie, presiding, began by pointing out that this was not a decision-making session but should be used for questions and suggestions which would be taken up by the General Secretariat Committee. The second session would deal with the practical details.

Bishop Jonas Jonson, Moderator of the Assembly Planning Committee, introduced the report. Since Central Committee last met, the planning had moved along well and an expectation had built up that this would be an inspiring, renewing event with a vision of unity, peace and justice, as we move into the new millennium.

A full discussion ensued, touching on a number of issues dealt with by the APC:

- Eucharist, Worship

In an attempt to respond to the discussion in Central Committee in 1995, when no agreement was reached on the APC's proposal that there be no assembly eucharist, it was recommended that the main church traditions represented in Harare be asked to host eucharistic celebrations (Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant). The term "Protestant" here gave rise to a good deal of concern, and the issue was referred to the General Secretariat Committee for reconsideration. Dr Tveter explained that the APC and AWC's intention was that a local church which has an open table be invited to host a eucharist for all assembly participants who were able to partake.

Bishop Neill felt that to propose four separate eucharists reflected the attitude of those churches which believe that eucharistic sharing cannot take place prior to unity. Yet there should be recognition too of the view of those who believe that eucharistic sharing foreshadows that unity.

Others felt that to have no eucharist at an assembly would be more painful than having one which could not be open to all, thus underlining our divisions

rather than emphasising the measure of unity achieved thus far.

Dr Granberg-Michaelson wondered if this unity could be celebrated around the sacrament of baptism. Perhaps a baptism of an infant or a new believer could be observed in Harare, where all could participate and thus give a sign to the belief that a person is baptised into the whole church and not into one confession. He asked that the APC give consideration to this proposal, and several speakers spoke in support of this proposal.

Bishop Nifon felt that the frustrations of not being able to share an open eucharist should be seen as a challenge and faced in a positive way. It was important to continue to reflect spiritually and theologically, and engage ourselves more profoundly in relation to the understandings of the eucharist as the centre of Christian sacramental life.

As a member of APC, Fr Kishkovsky spoke of the joint meeting held with the Assembly Worship Committee and the testimony of AWC members. It was clear that they had worked in a prayerful and discerning way and had spent much time and spiritual energy on the question of a eucharist. Particularly impressive was the fact that those who spoke most eloquently *against* the holding of one open eucharist at the assembly were those who had originally been in favour of it.

Responding, Bishop Jonson explained that the intention regarding the **Eucharist** was that one of the local churches (perhaps the Anglican cathedral) would invite those who would wish to participate in an open eucharist; this would be organised liturgically in an ecumenical way.

- Hearings, Plenaries

Dr Love recalled that Hearings had been organised at Vancouver, but had not been included at Canberra which meant there was little chance for discussion on the work done over the previous seven years. Since they were being re-introduced for Harare, she urged that a way be found to organise them in such a way as to have an overarching discussion of the issues. Others agreed that the hearings should be organised around themes rather than following the present Unit structure. Prof. Aagaard felt there was need for more discussion of how the future work of the Council would be envisaged.

Regarding the plan to limit plenaries to three, some felt that another one should be added to report on the world conferences on Faith and Order and on World Mission and Evangelism. However, Bishop Jonson said that due to time limitations, there could not be more than three plenary sessions, in order

to give sufficient time to the Padare. These two conferences could be the subject of Hearings.

- Election processes

The proposals were in general acceptable, though there was not yet any clear proposal regarding the election of Presidents.

Prof. Aagaard was convinced that the office of president should be abolished as she believed it was no longer relevant. Bishop Jonson responded that if such a proposal were accepted, the necessary change would have to be made to the Constitution.

- 50th Anniversary

On the question of a worship event in the context of a common commitment of the churches to the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC, Metropolitan Kirill referred to the attempt to covenant together during the Seoul Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (1990). Some had felt unable to participate and there was criticism on the part of many member churches about such a procedure. He urged the APC to give advance information about the plans for such an event in order to avoid any misunderstandings. It was important that this be a joyful event in which all can participate in good faith.

Prof. Aagaard suggested that the anniversary worship event might offer the occasion to celebrate our common baptism. Would it not be possible to combine a recommitment to the ecumenical movement with a celebration of the unity we have in our common baptism? Ms Odonkor suggested that "recommitment day" might be commemorated in the member churches every year, as a specific time for them to think about the Council's work, and perhaps take up an offering.

- Children's programme

Ms Paulin and Dr Walker-Smith were disappointed at the decision not to arrange a children's programme. Both felt this would bring in a special dimension to the assembly. Surely one of the local churches could be asked to organise something?

- Other

Dr Walker-Smith noted that no recognition of staff or members of previous committees, commissions or working groups had taken place at Canberra and she wondered whether something of nature could be done at Harare?

Metr. Kirill felt that small groups were not helpful. Sometimes good ideas were expressed there, but unless there were opportunity to share them more widely, there was no possibility for such suggestions to be taken up.

At the next session, the General Secretary referred first to the **Memorandum of Understanding** between the Government of Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches (see Appendix VI). He was convinced that, with the signing of this Memorandum, the necessary guarantees were in place for holding the Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, securing the necessary space to face issues openly and honestly according to the Council's procedures.

Secondly, Dr Raiser reported on his **encounter with President Mugabe** of Zimbabwe in August 1996. He said the President attributes great significance to the WCC's coming to Zimbabwe and recalled his earlier contacts with the Council through PCR. He expressed concern about the fragility of the moral fabric of Zimbabwe society and re-stated his personal views. The General Secretary was given opportunity to explain that, as a body committed to unity in faith, life and service, the WCC could not keep away from one of the most seriously divisive issues in the life of its member churches; this explanation had helped the President appreciate the kind of pressure the WCC is under.

Dr Raiser had suggested that, while there was no common mind among the churches, there was probably a broad consensus that active discrimination of homosexuals was unacceptable and would violate the Council's basic commitment to the defence of human rights.

The President was informed about the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding; contacts with the Government would continue on the broader level through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In view of the Council's financial situation, concern had been expressed about the wisdom of going to Harare. The General Secretary reiterated that the assembly budget was independent from the WCC general budget: assembly funds were designated and could not be used for other expenditure. Contributions were being received as anticipated and there was no reason to doubt that the total of CHF 11 million would be reached.

Nevertheless, an "alternative" budget had been established on the basis of an assembly in Geneva and shared with the Finance Sub-committee. Since the saving would be minimal, the Executive Committee had reaffirmed its conviction that Harare be retained as the Assembly venue.

In discussion, Ms Westra referred to the difficult situation of homosexuals in Zimbabwe - many were not safe in their own homes. As a matter of conscience, can the WCC meet in a country where people are treated so badly?

Dr Sherry warned of the possibility that during the assembly some non-violent protests may take place on the issue of homosexuality: would this not be against Zimbabwe law? What was the Council's position here?

Dr Raiser pointed to the particular character of the Memorandum of Understanding, noting that no government would accept any questioning of its laws by those who visit as guests. This did not exclude the possibility of non-violent protests, and the Zimbabwe government was aware that such demonstrations might take place; this was part of the culture of the assembly and the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Zimbabwe constitution. Dr Raiser and his colleagues had been satisfied with the interpretation of the law received from the Ministry of Home Affairs, and he felt it was important to go to Harare with a readiness to be open to the concerns of the Zimbabwe people.

Mr Reardon asked whether homosexuals in Zimbabwe would be free to participate in the assembly, and he was not sure that the Memorandum of Understanding had gone far enough. Aware that the WCC had not yet debated the issue of sexual orientation, he hoped a way could be found to avoid the divisive character of such debates in some member churches.

Dr Raiser said it was clear that the situation of gays and lesbians in Zimbabwe was delicate, and every effort would be made to see that the presence of the assembly would not make it even more so. Much would depend on the spirit in which we go to Zimbabwe: if we go in a spirit of reconciliation and mutual respect, we may be able to make a witness that will be heard and followed in the country itself.

Several speakers thought it might be helpful to have a vote on whether CC should enter a debate on the issue of homosexuality, but the General Secretary did not feel it would be appropriate to vote on such a sensitive, deeply held conviction. Dr Raiser recommended to the attention of participants a text published by the Joint Working Group dealing with ways of handling divisive ethical issues within our fellowship. (cf. Report of GS Committee, p.83).

Ms Gcabashe was concerned that members continued to question the decision to go to Harare. She pointed out that every country has its own laws and people are expected to abide by them - this was no different in Zimbabwe.

President Mugabe had assured Dr Raiser that assembly participants would be free to act and worship as they wished, but not to break the law. If these questions persisted, she as an African would wonder whether the problem was related to Africa or to homosexuality.

Metr. Kirill agreed that Central Committee members were divided over the issue of homosexuality, but sooner or later they would have to face up to it. Would it not be better to do so within Central Committee rather than for it to happen at the assembly? He urged that the matter be settled here.

Fr Kishkovsky agreed it was critically important to deal with the issue and confront one another at this meeting of Central Committee. He was aware from his own experience in the NCCCUSA how divisive the subject was, and how close it came to rupturing the fellowship in the NCCC. But if we did not face it now, he believed we would regret it later.

Ms Bösenberg pointed out that it was not easy to discuss homosexuality as a heterosexual because they are not involved directly. If we allow ourselves to be divided, we could be blamed for creating even greater division over the issue.

Responding, the General Secretary suggested that this discussion be continued in the General Secretariat Committee rather than in plenary (see report back on this conversation, p.79-80).

Other points raised included the following:

Dr Nagy emphasised the importance of the Message from this special assembly which he hoped would be shared with all churches and Christians of the world. We should be asking Christians to pray for unity and take the necessary further steps towards unity.

Mr Mendez pointed out that, with the highly organised assembly programme, delegates had less and less opportunity to participate in discussions. He urged that time be given to information-sharing sessions about the Council's work which could also be a contribution to its future work.

Dr Garrett asked whether any discussion had taken place about the possible down-sizing of Central Committee. If this was envisaged, it was important for the churches to be aware and to have opportunity to consult with each other regarding nominations for membership in Central Committee. Dr Raiser responded that this should become part of the discussion around the Common

Understanding and Vision process. Any change in the composition of Central Committee would imply a major constitutional change and would require careful preparation before being shared with the member churches.

Bishop Lavrentije referred to the fact that the church had existed for 2000 years without achieving unity; the WCC had only existed for 50 years and could not expect to achieve unity in such a short time. But he urged participants to realise that great changes had taken place in these 50 years: now we were sitting together, praying together, sharing problems together. He proposed that in Harare there be a con-celebration where all are together in the liturgy and people go to different points to receive Holy Communion so that all who wish to share may do so. For him, this would be the best gift we could give to God at this time of Jubilee.

Concluding the debate, the Moderator said that, through the Council, he had learned how to celebrate our unity joyfully, yet at the same time to understand and respect our differences. Everyone was caught in different directions and conflicts, but in the Council it was possible to learn to live with creative tensions. He saw this as a positive sign, part of our koinonia. We have to affirm our commitment to go to Harare and go with the conviction that we are a united body in spite of some different approaches to ethical issues.

The Report of the APC and the Memorandum of Understanding were referred to the General Secretariat Committee.

* * *

II. Report of the Assembly Planning Committee (APC)

At a later session, Ms Gcabashe presented the report of the General Secretariat Committee with regard to the report of the Assembly Planning Committee and Assembly Worship Committee (AWC), as follows:

The GS Committee expressed appreciation for the work done by the Assembly Planning Committee and the Assembly Worship Committee. It noted that the contents of the discussions in the CC plenary on the Assembly would be shared with the APC to guide its future work.

The text of the APC report was as follows:

The Assembly Planning Committee met in Morges, near Geneva, in June 1996.

A. Preparations for the Assembly

The staff team preparing the Assembly gave an update on the preparatory work done since the previous meeting of the APC.

In February 1996 staff visited Harare to inspect the facilities at the University of Zimbabwe, to meet with the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and to confirm contractual arrangements with the Zimbabwe Convention Bureau which would be responsible, in cooperation with the Harare Assembly Office, for many of the local logistical arrangements.

Local Preparations

The Zimbabwe Council of Churches tabled a report of their preparations to date, noting that the Zimbabwe Assembly Office had moved from the ZCC office into its own offices. In August, Jean Skuse (local coordinator for the Seventh Assembly in Canberra) was to spend a month in Zimbabwe, at the invitation of the churches in Zimbabwe, to assist with local preparations. Her visit was being sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Australia. Report was also made on the activities to raise local financial support for the preparation of the Assembly.

B. Assembly Daily Programme

The APC reconfirmed its earlier recommendation for a five-phase assembly and made the following recommendations on different aspects of the assembly programme.

- a) Small groups: Their primary purpose would be community building: a space for sharing experiences and for bible study. There would be about 60 groups of 15 people each from different regions and confessions. There would be no interpretation or reporting back.
- b) Hearings: Primarily for delegates. The purpose would be to review the work of the Council over the previous seven years, to assess and evaluate it and to set directions for the future.

To be organized in the form of a Hearing where a group of members of the Programme Guidelines Committee would act as "Jurors" to "conduct an enquiry" by raising questions on matters presented at the Hearing by the staff and informed participants. The delegates would also raise questions and give their assessment of the work done.

Eventually the Hearing would concentrate on "future directions" for the area of work represented by the Unit concerned. The APC noted

that more work needed to be done by the staff on the shape and content of the Hearings so that they fulfil the constitutional mandate of assessing the work done and provide a basis for future work.

Recommendation 1

■ *that Hearings on past work of the WCC be structured around major themes in the period since Canberra. These should include a Hearing on the General Secretariat area, especially on the work of the Offices of Church and Ecumenical Relations, Inter-Religious Relations, the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, and the Office of Communication, and that it be conducted by the Policy Reference Committee.*

c) Plenaries: The APC recommended that there be a plenary session on the Assembly theme to give overall cohesion to the programme.

Recommendation 2

■ *that no more than three Plenary Sessions be held and that the third plenary be on the Assembly theme "Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope".*

Two other plenaries had already been decided upon:

- Africa: to enable the churches in Africa to present the riches and the concerns of Africa;
- Ecumenical Decade in Solidarity with Women: offering opportunity for the churches to hear and evaluate the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women initiated by the Central Committee in 1988.

Other programmatic concerns of the Council, and reports on its major meetings including the World Conferences on Faith and Order and on World Mission and Evangelism, would be reported in the Hearings and the Padare (meeting place).

Dr Tsetsis, noting that Hearings would deal with specific programmatic topics, reiterated his view that crucial concerns for the churches such as the unity of the church, mission and evangelism, should be brought to the attention of the whole body of the assembly. He moved that one more plenary session be added in order to receive reports of the Faith and Order Commission and the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism.

Ms Gcabashe pointed out that this had already been referred to in an earlier session and it had been decided to adhere to the three plenaries mentioned. Bishop Jonson agreed with the importance of presenting these themes to the

whole assembly but assured Dr Tsetsis that there would be opportunity for this in the Padare where programmes involving the whole assembly could be arranged. But the APC was anxious to limit the plenaries to three.

Dr Tsetsis requested that his amendment nevertheless be put to the vote:

that a fourth plenary session be added to receive reports of the Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the World Conference on Mission and Evangelism.

The amendment was lost.

d) Padare (Meeting Place)

Recommendation 3

■ *that the Open Space or Market Place be renamed Padare, a Shona word meaning "meeting place".*

Several offerings in the Padare would be organised by the APC, but it was felt that the Padare should also be open for the churches to make their own presentations. This would bring creativity into the Padare and would also help the WCC to be alive to the voice of the Spirit in new ways. However, the APC recognised the need to establish criteria for participation in the Padare, and accepted the following guidelines:

Aims

Applications for presentation at the Padare should be seen as:

- furthering the aims and objectives of the WCC;
- corresponding to the theme of the Assembly;
- enhancing dialogues about issues in a mutually responsible way;
- enhancing dialogues among ourselves in terms of education about each other and addressing the question of the ways in which we might work better together.

Methodology

- a) Each application should have a recommendation in writing from a member church, a Christian World Communion, a Regional Ecumenical Organisation, a National Council of Churches or an affiliated organisation, a list of which needs to be established.
- b) Applications should be on one side of an A4 sheet and should clearly state the aims and objectives, names of speakers, list of participants, and the size of space required.

The APC envisaged that there might need to be different forms and

processes of application for programmes, creative arts, and for the sale of articles produced in projects of the churches at the Padare.

Decisional criteria

It should be made clear that there was no guarantee that all applications would be accepted, for the following reasons:

- Duplication of topics - but groups submitting topics on the same theme could be put in touch with one another in order to come up with a common suggestion;
- Duplication of existing in-house programmes of the WCC;
- Questions of balance - between regions, confessional families, etc;
- Physical lack of space.

It should be made clear that the space offered free of charge was the only financial subsidy that would be given by the WCC for the presentations in the Padare.

The APC suggested topics for the Padare which were given to the staff working group for further refinement, with the suggestion that they consider grouping them together into different streams or tracks.

e) 50th Anniversary

Recommendation 4

■ *that the culmination of the 50th Anniversary celebrations be combined with the common commitment of the churches to the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC in a worship event, and that every attempt be made to bring the recognised leadership of the churches to the event so that they might participate in an Act of Recommitment on behalf of the member churches.*

Recommendation 5

■ *that the Central Committee call on the churches to mark Sunday 20 September 1998 - Recommitment Day - with a world-wide celebration of the 50th anniversary of the WCC, and that member churches be invited to mention the WCC in prayer and/or through a brief statement, as well as to celebrate Holy Communion where they wish, and to take up a collection as a mark of solidarity and support of the ministry of the WCC.*

The APC also recommended that, to mark the 50th anniversary, especially the days it would be celebrated, invitations be sent to significant persons who were present at the inauguration of the World

Council of Churches, and those who have made a notable contribution to the ecumenical movement.

C. Election Process

In light of the difficulties experienced at the Canberra Assembly, and following discussion and debate at the Johannesburg Central Committee in January 1994, which was based on a detailed proposal prepared to consider a number of options for the election process, the Assembly Planning Committee recommended to the Central Committee that:

Recommendation 6

■ *The existing process of election to the Central Committee be used for the Eighth Assembly with the following recommended refinements:*

- *that the churches be informed in advance that the Nominations Committee, in normal circumstances, might call upon any one of their delegates to serve on the Central Committee;*
- *that the Nominations Committee will seek to respect the wishes of the nominating churches, while acknowledging that it might not be able to accept all recommendations;*
- *that the churches consult together, well before the Assembly, within regional and sub-regional groupings, based on geographical and numerical aspects of Council membership, to submit joint proposals of balanced lists for consideration by the Nominations Committee. Any such list should contain more names than the number of seats anticipated to be filled by the respective region or sub-region. This process, together with the 25% of nominations received from the Orthodox churches, should be used to obtain 90% of the required members of Central Committee;*
- *that the balance of nominations of members be finalised by the Nominations Committee during the Assembly to ensure that an overall balance has been achieved;*
- *that the Nominations Committee, as in the past in completing its work at the Assembly, be asked to consult with delegates from member churches or a region where necessary to arrive at agreement.*
- *that the practice of making the members of the Nominations Committee non-eligible for nomination to the Central Committee be continued.*

Mr Gill reported that representatives of REOs and NCCs present at this meeting had considered the proposal that churches consult together regarding nominations for appointment to Central Committee and welcomed this principle of prior consultation. NCCs were ready to do everything possible to assist the process. However, sub-regional and regional consultation would present real difficulties. No amendment was being proposed, but the APC was asked to take note that this was a problem which they were asked to reflect on as they develop their proposals further.

Dr Ariarajah responded that the recommendation should be seen rather as an encouragement to the churches to consult with one another, not as a directive. The GS Committee wished to retain the wording, but this was not to be seen as the only way to formulate nominations for Central Committee.

Dr Love raised the question of nominations for Presidents and, in order to avoid repeating the kind of conflicts experienced in Canberra, she submitted an amendment as follows:

if regional or sub-regional groupings put forward nominations for Presidents, these groupings should offer two or more names.

Mr Briggs responded that a wider discussion was needed about the role of the Presidents in the life of the Council; once that had taken place the question of the election of Presidents could be dealt with.

D. Visitors' Programme

The APC approved the number of accredited visitors and the breakdown per region:

Africa	400
Asia (including Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand)	300
Europe	300
North America	300
All other regions	50

It decided that no special programme would be organised for children, but a crèche would be provided for children up to seven years of age. Children from Zimbabwe would be invited to participate in appropriate moments in the life of the Assembly.

E. Differently Abled

The APC reconfirmed the resolutions made by Central Committee in 1995 regarding participation of differently abled persons at the Assembly.

Recommendation 7

- *that differently abled persons be included in the 15% category.*

F. Assembly Committees

It was felt that the present structure of the Business Committee should be reconsidered for more effective functioning and to include continuity in the preparation of the Assembly.

Recommendation 8

- *that a revised wording of Rule IV.5.a) concerning membership of the Business Committee be submitted to Central Committee in 1997.*

Rule IV.5.a) states: "The Business Committee of the Assembly shall consist of the Moderator and Vice Moderator or Vice Moderators of the Central Committee, the General Secretary, the Presidents of the Council, the moderators of sections and committees (who may appoint substitutes) and ten delegates who are not members of the outgoing Central Committee, who shall be elected in accordance with Rule IV.2. "

G. Regional Meetings

The usefulness of regional preparatory meetings was strongly affirmed by the APC, but because of the limitations on the Assembly budget they could not be fully funded. Therefore attempts must be made to link the regional meetings with other meetings in the regions and negotiations made with churches to facilitate regional, sub-regional and national meetings of assembly delegates. Furthermore it was suggested that criteria be established on how the limited funds were to be distributed. Special efforts must be made to facilitate regional meetings in Africa.

H. Pre-Assembly Events

Pre-Assembly Team Visits: The first priority for these visits should be the countries neighbouring Zimbabwe; they would take place in late 1996 or early 1997. The second priority would be those countries in Africa which have been infrequently visited by representatives of the WCC, including: Benin, Congo, Eritrea, Gabon, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Swaziland, Togo and Uganda.

Delegates would be asked what countries they wished to visit on their way to the Assembly as part of their own exposure to the life of the churches in Africa. Women to Women visits and Youth to Youth visits have also been proposed.

Pre-Assembly Meetings: The APC heard a report on plans for the Decade Festival and the Pre-Assembly Women's meeting (PAWM).

The plans include Women to Women visits from 28 August-3 September; the Decade Festival 4-7 September, and the Pre-Assembly Women's Meeting (with youth participants) on 8 September. The proposal on the Decade Festival would be shared with the Unit III Committee.

The recommendations of the Mandated Working Group for Youth were brought to the attention of the APC and the following timetable for the **Pre-Assembly Youth Event (PAYE)** was proposed: Stewards' orientation on 5 September, a Stewards and Youth combined meeting on 6-7 September, followed by a joint meeting with the Women's Pre-Assembly programme on 8 September.

The Orthodox Pre-Assembly meeting would be organised by the Orthodox Task Force.

I. Communications

An updated communications report was presented to the APC, in particular the proposal from the Assembly Staff Group that the Canberra to Harare report be published in the form of a popular illustrated magazine. According to the rules of the WCC, the Central Committee shall report to the Assembly on the actions it has taken during its period of office. Up till now all reports from a Central Committee to an Assembly have been published in book form. There were however no specific requirements for the form in which the Central Committee should offer this account.

It was felt that the previous publications had tried to serve two purposes - to prepare delegates for the Assembly and to provide a brief archival record of the period between Assemblies. Considering that it would be better to separate these two purposes and to meet them through two different publications, the APC recommended to Central Committee:

Recommendation 9

- *that the Canberra to Harare report be published in the form of a popular illustrated magazine which would also point to the availability of fuller resources for those who need to have them;*
- *that the report on the Eighth Assembly be so designed that it would also carry significant sections reporting on the work done by the WCC during the previous seven years.*

J. Assembly Budget

The APC was informed that, in response to the current financial situation of the WCC, the assembly budget had been reduced by CHF 1 million to a total of CHF 11 million. It had thus been revised to take account of this reduction (see Appendix VIII).

The APC expressed satisfaction with the income situation and requested the Office of Income Coordination and Development (OICD) to follow up closely on the pledges made by member churches towards the Assembly budget.

The APC approved the criteria for travel subsidies and noted the Central Committee decision of September 1995 not to grant a subsidy *"unless a member church contributes at least CHF 1000 a year"* to the general funds of the WCC.

K. Joint Meeting between the APC and the AWC

A joint meeting of the APC and the Assembly Worship Committee (AWC) was held to follow up the 1995 discussion in Central Committee regarding the celebration of the Eucharist at the Assembly. The joint meeting made the following recommendation:

Recommendation 10

- a) that on Sunday 20 September, the local churches in Zimbabwe be requested to host the Assembly to Eucharistic celebrations according to church traditions represented in Harare, one of these celebrations to be open to all who in good conscience would like to participate in that Eucharist;*
- b) that, as in past assemblies, facilities be made available on the campus where the Assembly is held for the traditions that have the practice of daily or weekly Eucharistic services.*

The AWC gave the following rationale for the proposal:

- The reasons for originally asking for "fast" from an official assembly eucharist were in order to be as clear and honest as possible about our actual situation after 50 years;
- When this original proposal was rejected by Central Committee, the AWC began to work on other possibilities which would be more true to the degree of communion which is possible for us today. They saw

the present situation as representing four "families" who are able to be "in communion" within their membership: a) Oriental Orthodox; b) Eastern Orthodox; c) Roman Catholic; and d) Protestant/Anglican.

- They envisage a time on Sunday morning when the assembly would leave the campus and accept eucharistic hospitality from Zimbabwean Roman Catholic, Orthodox (Eastern and Oriental), and Protestant hosts. This would enable us all to together turn to God from our actual situations, as people who celebrate the distance we have come and the unity God has given us within our "families", but recognize that we still remain divided at the Lord's table. We would celebrate the road travelled and seek to open ourselves to God and each other. From our separateness we would then move in the afternoon toward new vision and commitment. Thus the whole day would be an attempt to lift up the truth of ourselves - divided yet looking to God for inspiration and healing.

Bishop Neill was grateful for this revised recommendation regarding the Eucharist, which responded to the various points of view expressed earlier.

L. Memorandum of Understanding (see Appendix VI)

It was reported that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the Zimbabwe Government, the World Council of Churches and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

The General Secretary briefed the APC members about its contents, pointing out that, in addition to matters included in memoranda for previous Assemblies, the Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Zimbabwe included the right of the WCC to determine the content of the programme and discussions at the University and to make pronouncements and publications on subjects of its own choice.

The General Secretary met with President Mugabe in August 1996. The Memorandum of Understanding was made public at the time of the Central Committee meeting in September 1996 in consultation with the parties that had signed it.

Fr Kishkovsky recalled that in an earlier plenary session, the debate around questions of homosexuality in relation to the Memorandum of Understanding had emerged in a specific way, and that that conversation had continued in the GS Committee. He asked the General Secretary to give a brief account of the substance of that conversation.

The General Secretary explained that this was perhaps the first open and serious discussion that had taken place about the issues, giving opportunity to listen to one another without pressure for taking any decision. It was acknowledged as potentially a very divisive concern that was already weighing heavily on the internal unity of several member churches. Some church leaders spoke of their experiences, while others warned of the danger that if the Council were to push the debate about human sexuality and sexual orientation too sharply, some churches might feel constrained to reconsider their relationship with the WCC.

The GS Committee concluded that the question was clearly on the WCC's agenda, and that nothing would be gained by ignoring it. Therefore ways must be found of responding to this concern - a pastoral, ethical and justice concern - with several levels of discussion in the churches.

In considering what this meant for the assembly, there seemed to be an emerging understanding that a way must be found by which this Central Committee could be helped to understand better the nature of the issue that had to be addressed, what we share as a common base, what we can expect to take place at the assembly and what should not take place there, so that we remain in control of the assembly process. The General Secretary assured Central Committee that there was no intention of closing the debate but to seek the most responsible way to deal with it. He was encouraged by the discussion that had taken place as it helped to show the initial way forward.

III. Action by the Central Committee

The Central Committee voted in favour of the following recommendations with regard to the APC report. It:

- a) received and approved the report and recommendations of the Assembly Planning Committee as amended;*
- b) welcomed and endorsed the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the WCC, the ZCC and the Government of Zimbabwe to facilitate the holding of the Assembly in Harare;*
- c) recommended that the Assembly Planning Committee explore how best to express our thirst for unity through recognition of our one common baptism, including the possibility of giving common witness to the celebration of a baptism during the Assembly.*

The Moderator agreed with the substance of recommendation (c) above but feared that it could lead to misunderstanding in some member churches. He hoped it could be arranged in such a way as not to imply the mutual recognition of baptism.

Also with regard to recommendation (c) above, Dr Granberg-Michaelson felt that our approach to the Assembly was focusing too much on the things that divide us; the world would see how divided we are. Surely the member churches and the world wanted us to focus also on what unites us? It was in that spirit that this recommendation had been put forward by the GS Committee. He was aware that the Protestant community also had its own divisions around the issue of baptism, which have to be discussed. This resolution was asking that we give visible witness to what we affirm.

The APC and AWC could take into account the sensitivities of our confessional bodies in thinking carefully about what is needed. By recognising our common baptism we affirm that we do not believe in proselytism nor in any attempt to deny fundamental respect for each other's traditions.

* * *

Before closing the session devoted to the Eighth Assembly, Dr Nababan welcomed Rev. M. Kuchera and Rev. Enos Chomutiri of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, and Ms Rosemary Siyachitema of the Eighth Assembly office in Harare.

Mr Kuchera told Central Committee that the Zimbabwe churches were humbled by the confirmation of Harare as the venue for the 1998 Assembly; this had finally removed the anxiety they had experienced since 1994, and they were confident that they would see the Assembly through with the dignity it deserved. He assured Central Committee that all delegates and participants in the assembly would be warmly welcomed to Zimbabwe.

Dr Nababan asked Mr Kuchera to convey greetings on behalf of members of the Central Committee to the churches of Zimbabwe.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

Ms Ritchie, chairing this business session, called on Ms Virginia Gcabashe and Mr John Briggs, co-moderators of the Committee on the General Secretariat, to present the report. (Some items dealt with by the GS Committee are reported under the respective chapter of these minutes; these include the response to the Moderator's and General Secretary's reports, the CUV process, the Eighth Assembly, and membership of Central Committee).

Mr Briggs gave a brief overview of the work of the Committee, noting that discussion on the Moderator's and General Secretary's reports was more wide-ranging than it appeared from the report. Their full significance was in the way in which they had set the climate for this meeting of Central Committee which was helpful at a difficult time.

A proposal for future management structures had been scrutinised by the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Staffing and Nominations Committees; it had been considered not only from the point of view of finance but also from the point of view of staffing strategy. It was clear that the staff at the Centre would be smaller than in the past in order to keep running costs to a minimum, yet certain costs were inevitable in running an organisation of such complexity.

Referring to some programmatic items in the report Mr Briggs underlined the importance of the Council's close working relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, even though this was not on the same level as in many REOs and NCCs where the RCC is a full member. He took the opportunity to recognise the presence of Msgr John Radano and Msgr John Mutiso-Mbinda, representing the Council on Promoting Christian Unity of the Roman Catholic Church, and to express thanks for their wise counsel.

Ms Gcabashe then presented the report as follows:

1. Matters arising from the Activities Report of the General Secretariat, Offices of Relationships, Communication, Management and Finance

1.1 The GS Committee heard special presentations on the following aspects of the report:

- The WCC and Celebrations to mark the Year 2000,
- Ecumenical News International,
- The second Christian-Muslim-Jewish meeting on Jerusalem,
- Celebration of the Jubilee of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey,
- Two documents prepared by the Joint Working Group between the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church on: *The Challenge of Proselytism and the Calling to Common Witness* and *The Ecumenical Dialogue on Moral Issues - Potential Sources of Common Witness or of Divisions*.

1.2 The Committee requested that the joint statement coming out of the meeting on Jerusalem, the two documents of the Joint Working Group and a summary document on the WCC and the Year 2000 be circulated to the members of the Central Committee.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the following actions:

- a) *The Central Committee received the Report of the General Secretariat and related areas⁴, and commended the work done during the period since its last meeting;*
- b) *The Central Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the Council accept a funding commitment to Ecumenical News International (ENI) at the same level in real terms as at present for a further period of three years from 1997.*

2. Future Management Structures

The GS Committee studied a document on Future Management Structures along with the recommendations made on it by the Executive Committee. While in agreement with the general directions, the Committee was convinced that any decisions on future structures should be made in the context of the Common Understanding and Vision process and an overall review of the structure of the whole Council.

⁴ These include the work of the Office on Church and Ecumenical Relations (OCER); the Office on Inter-Religious Relations (OIIR); the Eighth Assembly Office; the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey; the Office of Communication, including the Press and Information Office, ENI, Visual Arts, Publications, Language Service; and the Office of Management and Finance, including Central Services, the Ecumenical Library, Computer Information Services, the Finance Department, the Office of Income Coordination and Development, and the Personnel Office.

The GS Committee recommended that:

- a) *the Central Committee receive the report on "Future Management Structures" and approve the underlying principles for the reorganization of the General Secretariat contained in it;*
- b) *the Central Committee declare a vacancy for an Executive Director for the Department of Finance and Administration and authorize the vacancy to be filled if possible by 1 July 1997;*
- c) *the Central Committee, noting possible further reduction in financial resources available to the Council, and the need to change the Council's working style and management structures in the light of the CUV process, ask the General Secretary to pursue the proposals for the reorganization of the General Secretariat, and where necessary to implement them and to report to the Executive and Central Committees;*
- d) *the Central Committee authorize the General Secretary, in consultation with the Officers and the appropriate staff groups, and in the light of the CUV process, to give immediate attention to developing an overall alternative programme and management structure for the whole work of the Council; and authorize the Executive Committee to give policy direction to this effort so that a proposed alternative structure be brought to the next meeting of the Central Committee in September 1997.*

Ms Welch asked about the inter-relationship of any proposed change in structures and the Common Understanding and Vision (CUV) process. She felt that structural change should follow the outcome of CUV rather than precede it. She expressed concern about the remit of any drafting group that would work on revising the CUV document and asked for more information about the criteria for naming such a group and what their task would in fact be.

Dr Love asked that in planning the work of Central Committee in 1997, provision be made for the Unit Committees to have full discussion of any proposals related to re-structuring, so that those related to programmes and those related to management and finance can make judgements about whether the proposals appropriately meet the needs of programme or not.

Secondly, she warned against any proposal that might reduce the membership of Central Committee. This was the authoritative body where the churches

have an opportunity for direct participation and, although no direct suggestion on these lines was before the Committee, she wanted to make known her opinion that it would be a grave mistake to limit its size.

Bishop Ayres Mattos raised a point of order: he felt it was not wise to act on point 2 d) above before hearing what the other units had to say on the matter. The Moderator agreed, and in view of the fact that the other reports were not yet available, he proposed that further discussion and action on this item be postponed until after the Unit Reports had been received. This was **agreed**.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of points a), b) and c) above.

In a later session, Dr Nababan presiding, the Central Committee resumed its discussion on point 2 d) - repeated here for reference:

d) that the Central Committee authorize the General Secretary, in consultation with the Officers and the appropriate staff groups, and in the light of the CUV process, to give immediate attention to developing an overall alternative programme and management structure for the whole work of the Council; and authorize the Executive Committee to give policy direction to this effort so that a proposed alternative structure be brought to the next meeting of the Central Committee in September 1997.

Ms Welch proposed deletion of the words "programme and". She was aware of the need for effective management, but at the same time there were unresolved questions in relation to the CUV process which she felt ought to be dealt with before the structural questions. CUV was addressing some of these fundamental questions, the answers to which could affect future programmes and management structures. She felt the proposal for immediate restructuring went against waiting until there was clarity as to what would be needed as the result of our new vision. She was in favour of putting our vision as a priority and our structures as a response to that vision.

Believing it would help give a clearer direction from Central Committee, Ms Welch proposed that, for the time being, it

"authorize the General Secretary.. to give immediate attention to developing an overall alternative management structure..."

Mr Lodberg spoke against the motion, even though he had some sympathy for it. He understood the whole system of programmes and finances as being

linked together. If we cut down programmes we are cutting down financial resources linked to those programmes. He felt that, because of this close inter-relationship, programmes were necessary in order to generate funds to run the Council.

Mr Allsop also spoke against the amendment on the basis that short-term action need not be in competition with the longer-term development of the structure in coordination with CUV. Some short-term action was needed that would enable the process in the longer term.

Dr Tanner believed the amendment helped to clarify the text. She felt the two questions were mixed up: what alternative structure would allow us to continue programmatic thrusts that have been affirmed in the Unit reports and by Central Committee? What do the pointers emerging from the CUV process have to say about the future alternative programmes and structures?

Ms Paulin, speaking in favour of the amendment, reminded members that we too often forget that we are not in control of this CUV process because we say God controls our lives - but we do not give God the chance to guide us. She believed that long-term measures were needed that would lead to a simpler lifestyle for the Council as a whole.

The Moderator was sympathetic to the motion by Ms Welch, but felt that, although it would be ideal to wait until the CUV process had reached its completion, it was clear to him that we could not afford to wait - concrete steps must be taken now. He agreed with Mr Lodberg that programmes and structures cannot be separated, and proposed that the motion be taken as a whole without stressing one aspect of it.

The amendment was lost (25 votes in favour, 48 against, and 2 abstentions).

Barbara Bazett proposed an addition in the last sentence, to read "*..proposed interim and flexible alternative structure...*"

Dr Kässmann was against this amendment because it was already difficult to explain to member churches how the Council functions without complicating the situation further.

On the contrary, Fr Kishkovsky felt that the amendment would allow us to affirm the necessary immediate steps while indicating that the longer-term fundamental decision would in due course be made by Central Committee.

The amendment was lost (26 votes in favour, 44 against, and 11 abstentions)

Ms Odonkor was concerned that the present wording would give too much power to the General Secretary. Dr Raiser responded that according to the Constitution and Rules he was obliged to use his authority only in consultation with all the decision-making bodies.

Dr Garrett was not concerned by the authority given to the General Secretary because she was confident that the Officers and the Executive Committee would act in the interests of the Council as a whole.

The Central Committee **voted in favour** of point 2 d) above.

The earlier session had continued with the report as follows:

3. Membership Applications

3.1 The GS Committee received applications for membership in the WCC from the Methodist Church in Togo, and the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, Zaïre. It noted that the Executive Committee, having studied the processing of the applications, had recommended that these two churches be received into full membership, bearing in mind the six month period within which other member churches may raise questions or objections concerning such membership.

The Central Committee **agreed**:

- *that the Methodist Church in Togo (Eglise méthodiste au Togo) be received as a full member of the World Council of Churches;*
- *that the Presbyterian Community of Kinshasa, Zaïre (Communauté presbytérienne de Kinshasa) be received as a full member of the World Council of Churches.*

3.2 The GS Committee also received a paper regarding the procedures⁵ to be followed on membership applications in the period up to the Eighth Assembly in 1998, and noted a list of churches that might be received into membership at the Assembly.

The Central Committee **agreed** with the general directions of the proposed

⁵ see minutes of the Executive Committee, September 1996

procedures with regard to membership applications and requested staff to process the applications of those churches that might be received into membership at the Assembly.

4. The Meaning of Membership

4.1 The GS Committee studied a new version of the draft document that had been received by Central Committee in September 1995 and presented a further revised text to the Central Committee.

The Central Committee **agreed** on the following actions:

- *to receive the document on the Meaning of Membership (Appendix V);*
- *to call upon the General Secretary to share it with the member churches;*
- *to recommend that it be used in the preparation of churches seeking membership;*
- *to request the General Secretary to share it with those involved in drafting the CUV document, so that the contents thereof might be incorporated into that document.*

Speaking as convenor of the Africa regional group, Dr Tolen said that, although there was agreement in the group on the necessity for some re-organisation of the Council's structures in view of the financial problems it was facing, Central Committee should not lose sight of those priorities which it had agreed upon earlier with respect to work related to the African continent. He hoped that these priorities would be maintained and would be carried out by persons competent in the areas concerned.

The Central Committee received the report of the Committee on the General Secretariat with appreciation.

REPORT OF UNIT I COMMITTEE: UNITY AND RENEWAL

Ms Ritchie, presiding, informed Central Committee that the students of the Graduate School of the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, were attending this session. They had recently begun their studies at Bossey and would be there until the end of December, working under the theme of the Programme to Overcome Violence.

The co-moderator of the Committee, Prof. Nenevi Seddoh, explained that in the absence of Metropolitan Daniel of Moldavia and Bukovina, Dr Paul Crow had acted as co-moderator of the Committee. She invited him to present the report.

Dr Crow began by expressing a special welcome to the Bossey students; he had been moderator of the Bossey Board for 8 years, and was particularly glad that they were able to attend this session of the Central Committee.

He presented the report as follows:

1. Introduction

The Unit I Committee was grateful for the report of the Executive Director which highlighted five issues currently before the Unit I Committee in the context of the present situation of the World Council of Churches: the financial situation of the World Council of Churches, the CUV process with the emerging related discussions on restructuring, the relationship between the WCC and the member churches, and the need for deeper theological reflection. In responding to these questions the Committee set its deliberations in the context of the reconciliation and unity which God wills to give in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit, and its response of fidelity to the Lord who calls.

2. Common Understanding and Vision Process (CUV)

The Unit I Committee considered the paper on the Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC process, and:

- commended and supported the general direction of the document, asking that the spiritual and theological orientation be strengthened;
- sent to the General Secretariat "Three Theses" with the request that they be considered by those responsible for re-drafting the document;

2.1 *Thesis one:*

The "heart beat" of the WCC is the search for the visible unity of the Church as stated in the document. The primary purpose of the World Council of Churches is to facilitate and encourage the churches to call one another to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe.

2.2 In our fellowship together for fifty years we have grown together in koinonia and learned many things about the unity we seek:

- unity is a gift of God, which is already ours as we share in the life of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are called to make this koinonia visible;
- the primary purpose of the visible unity of the Church is for the praise and glory of God;
- as long as Christians remain divided the credibility of their mission is at stake;
- the unity of the Church is integrally related to the unity of the whole of creation;
- the Church is to be a sign of God's rule and to contribute to peace and justice for humankind and the whole of creation;
- God continues to give gifts to the Church to sustain, nurture and renew its unity in faith, life and witness;
- the unity of the Universal Church is experienced in the local church and in the communion between local churches;
- unity is not uniformity but unity in rich diversity. As we experience this gift we discover an offering we can make to a divided humanity;
- unity is a dynamic reality in which differences can be sustained as we seek together to find convergence in matters of faith, order and morals.

2.3 The fellowship of the WCC allows us to understand, and to anticipate, visible unity in a unique way. The Council is the most comprehensive gathering of the churches that exists. This fellowship constantly challenges our often limited visions of unity formulated at a local, national or regional level. Our common pilgrimage is leading us towards a greater mutual recognition of one another. This is the basis for a recommitment to one another in the fellowship of the WCC.

2.4 *Thesis two:*

The World Council of Churches needs a structure which sustains the

central calling to visible unity and at the same time enables the inter-related consequences which are integral to the above vision of unity, for example, Mission and Evangelism, Care for Creation, Justice and Peace, and Inclusive Community. Ecumenical theological formation is necessary for all of these activities.

2.5 *Thesis three:*

In carrying out its vocation, the World Council of Churches has a unique part to play within the one Ecumenical Movement. This movement is a complex reality involving, for example, many churches in bilateral and multilateral partnerships at different levels of the churches' life and engaging in many different activities. The CUV document needs to tackle questions about the precise scope of what is meant by the ecumenical movement, for example:

- What is the relationship of the one Ecumenical Movement to those who work for the unity of humanity?
- What is the relationship of the one Ecumenical Movement to other faith communities?
- Should not the term the "one Ecumenical Movement" be used to include only those who are committed to an expressed vision of the visible unity of the Church?

Dr Crow then drew attention to the following recommendations:

The Unit Committee:

- asked that the section of the CUV document on *An Ecumenical Vision* be revised to reflect the redrafted document as a whole and in particular the vision of the visible unity of the Church which is God's gift and our calling;
- asked that at the next meeting of Central Committee in September 1997 sufficient time be given for a consideration of the revised text of the CUV document in order that any proposals for restructuring may be discussed in the light of the CUV document. The Committee noted that two members of Unit I Committee (Bishop Zacharias and Prof. Anna Marie Aagaard) are members of the sub-group of the Executive that is overseeing the continuing process on CUV;
- acknowledging the financial stringency required in the present circumstances and the need to prepare necessary restructuring,

nevertheless believed that any major restructuring should reflect and be firmly based upon the CUV process which will be brought to a completion at the Harare Assembly.

In response to a comment about the questions posed in Thesis three, Dr Crow explained that this was not intended to be a consensus statement but an attempt to get at the issues around the nature of the one ecumenical movement. The language we use is not always clear and we have to find a way of distinguishing between the search for the unity of the church on the one hand, and the search for a common affirmation of people of all faiths, all humanity, on the other.

Bishop Rogerson pointed out that for some people the unity of the church is an end in itself, but for others it is inextricably bound up with the reconciliation of humanity and Christ in God. The question was therefore posed in Thesis one so that the debate could take place, not to provide the answers.

Metr. Audi did not see any contradiction if the issue were put as a question: if there is one ecumenical movement, what is its relationship to other faiths?

The Moderator pointed to the creative ambiguity of this movement towards the churches but at the same time a movement away from the churches. We must wrestle with this in a serious and responsible way, as part of the CUV process.

Fr Kishkovsky commended the Unit Committee for providing encouragement for Central Committee to think about CUV and the ecumenical fellowship that is the WCC in a way that both addresses tensions and ambiguities, and is profoundly theological. There is a uniqueness about the Christian contribution towards the future of humanity which we must make as Christians, but this is not to deny the contributions of those of other faiths or of no faith. We must make certain that we think through what is the special quality of our contribution as Christians.

Dr Crow continued with the rest of the report - which was a review of the work of the four streams of the Unit - as follows:

3. Ecumenical Theological Education

3.1 The Unit I Committee reviewed and received the Report of the Unit I Commission on ETE.

3.2 The Committee received the report of the *Global Consultation on Ecumenical Theological Education: Its Viability Today*, held in Oslo in August 1996. The Unit Committee wished to thank publicly the Church of Norway and the Practical Theological Seminary for hosting this conference and for the significant help that it gave in terms of people and money.

3.3 The Committee recommended and the Central Committee **agreed** that:

- *those in theological education and ministerial formation have a vital part to play, not only through giving an ecumenical dimension to all parts of the curriculum, but by embodying ecumenical principles through the sharing of resources, the establishment of ecumenical colleges, institutes, courses and federations, and the interchange of faculty and students of different traditions;*
- *the WCC continue to be a catalyst in the work of ecumenical theological formation.*

Dr Koppe felt that some reference to Bossey should be included, but it was pointed out that Bossey is not exclusively an institute for theological education - it has a broader mandate.

4. Faith and Order

4.1 The Unit Committee heard a report of the work of Faith and Order carried out since the 1995 meeting of Central Committee. In particular it noted the report of the meeting of the Plenary Commission of Faith and Order held in Moshi, Tanzania in August 1996 and the message sent from that meeting to the member churches. The Unit Committee noted and commented upon the recommendations made by the Plenary Commission to the Board of Faith and Order which will guide the work during the next period.

4.2 These recommendations cover work on: a major study on Ecclesiology; Ecumenical Hermeneutics; Ecclesiology and Ethics (including proposals for the work on the Unity of the Church in relation to Ethnic Identity and Nationalism); continuing work on the Apostolic Faith Study process; work on Worship (including proposals for a consultation on baptismal ordo). The Unit Committee noted with appreciation a letter from the younger theologians expressing their gratitude for their participation in the meeting and describing their own process for making the Faith and Order agenda their own.

4.3 The Unit Committee:

- expressed its gratitude to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and the other local churches for their welcome and generous hospitality;
- welcomed the recommendations for future work made by the Plenary Commission to the Board of Faith and Order for the direction of its future work;
- noted in particular the publication of the study guide *Towards Sharing the One Faith* and encouraged its use among the churches;
- noted the intention to publish the three reports from the Ecclesiology and Ethics Study: *Costly Unity*, *Costly Commitment*, *Costly Obedience*, together with reflective essays.

It was particularly important for Faith and Order to have this meeting in Africa, said Dr Crow, and the impact was strong. Asked for more explanation of how this impact would be followed up and how it might affect the work of Faith and Order, Ms Seddoh stressed the value of the worship and spirituality aspect - the worship experience and the experience of prayer in that setting provided guidance for theological reflection.

Dr Crow added that the fact of being in Tanzania meant dealing with the concept of *utu* - the African definition of unity, the unity of people in all structures and the unity of creation. This had given a dimension to what Faith and Order had been wrestling with in relation to the study on "renewal of the church and renewal of human community". The Tanzanian culture has a particular gift to offer the ecumenical movement: tribal differences have become secondary for most people, while identity is the most important.

Secondly, said Dr Crow, talking about the unity of the church in the midst of visible poverty helped us realise that studies could not be continued in the same way as before. In the north the unity of the church is defined in relationship to the affluence surrounding us, but when we begin to find the unity which God gives and to which we are called in the midst of poverty, it does change the character.

Dr Kässmann was concerned that reference to work being done in collaboration with Unit III was not dealt with in more detail. Dr Crow explained that Faith and Order had indicated the studies for which it had primary responsibility. The agreement between Units I and III was that Faith and Order would take the initiative on the issue of ethnicity and nationalism, with Units III and IV participating, while Unit III would take the initiative on the Programme to Overcome violence, with Faith and Order participating.

5. Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community

5.1 The Unit I Committee reviewed and received the Report of the stream's programmatic work on Laity and the Differently-abled. The work with and on behalf of the differently-abled has sprung from the WCC's commitment to the larger project of an inclusive community and in response to the decision of the Canberra Assembly. However, because of the present financial situation this work has been severely curtailed and threatens to be discontinued all together.

5.2 The Unit Committee, with regard to the work with the Differently-abled:

- reaffirmed its commitment to the centrality of the concerns of the differently-abled to the work of the WCC;
- affirmed that while the appointment of a permanent staff member dedicated to work with and on behalf of the differently-abled remains the goal of Unit I, invites the Executive Committee of the Central Committee to be attentive to this concern.

5.3 The Unit Committee, with regard to the work on the Laity:

- reaffirmed the decision to hold a Global consultation on the theme *The Whole People of God* in May 1997, in the region of Geneva.

6. Worship and Spirituality

6.1 The Unit Committee heard a report on the work of the stream. It reviewed and received the recommendations made by the Unit Commission.

6.2 The Unit Committee:

- reaffirmed the importance of the work on Worship and Spirituality which provides a major contribution to the vision of unity and to an already experienced unity;
- regretted that, owing to the financial restrictions, the staff position on Worship and Spirituality has not been filled. This means that much important work is not being undertaken, for example the revision of the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle, the Eucharist at ecumenical gatherings, and ecumenical spirituality, especially in anticipation of the Assembly;
- affirmed the recommendation of the Unit Commission that the Unit I

Commission encourage member churches to make contributions specifically designated for funding the position of Executive Secretary for Worship and Spirituality;

- noted with appreciation the cooperative work done between the streams of Faith and Order and Worship and Spirituality and looked forward to the continuation of this cooperation;
- drew attention to the work already completed on the Common Date of Easter and affirmed the need for the continuation of this work, as noted by the Unit I Commission.

Dr Crow emphasised the importance, in the continuing reflections on CUV, of giving careful attention to the need for resources in the Worship and Spirituality stream, since a great deal of the time of the Consultant in that stream would for the next two years be devoted to the preparations for Worship at the assembly.

Bishop Zacharias stressed that Unit I - Unity and Renewal - was for him the most important of the Council's programme units. The vision of the ecumenical movement is unity, and the method for reaching that is renewal. It was our duty to see that the work of the different streams of the unit was emphasised and not diminished. What could be done about the vacant staff position in the Worship and Spirituality stream? He commended the cooperation and support being given between staff in the different streams; but surely more funding should be available for this important work.

In conclusion, Dr Crow said that the Unit Committee had come to see the inter-relatedness of the different streams of the Unit which do indeed belong together.

7. General

7.1 The Unit Committee noted:

- that the work of each of the streams in Unit I: Worship and Spirituality, Faith and Order, Lay Participation Towards Inclusive Community and Ecumenical Theological Education, contributes in a unique way towards the goal of visible unity;
- with appreciation the increasing integration of the different dimensions of the Unit's work, thereby providing a vital contribution to our understanding of the unity and renewal of the Church. It encouraged the members of the staff and the Unit I Commission to continue to express the inter-relatedness of all the work of the Unit.

8. Commendation

8.1 The members of the Unit I Committee wished to express their deep appreciation and pastoral concern to the staff of all the streams of Unit I in these days of difficulty. We warmly commend the Executive Director, Fr Dr Thomas FitzGerald, Mrs Beatrice Fleury Bengtsson and Mr John McVie, respectively Administrative Assistant and Finance Officer, and all the members of the staff of the streams of Unit I. We are encouraged by the collegiality of the working relationships in the Unit.

Barbara Bazett expressed concern that the Worship Consultant was so overworked that she feared he may not be able to do all that was expected of him. The General Secretary responded that this was the case for an increasing number of staff and in this difficult situation we have to support each other.

The General Secretary referred to the recommendation (above) encouraging member churches to "make contributions specifically designated for funding the position of Executive Secretary for Worship and Spirituality". This was a request to Central Committee members too to reflect about creative ways by which the WCC can be enabled to strengthen work in this area.

If Central Committee members were not able to encourage their churches to contribute more undesignated funding, the General Secretary urged them to consider the possibility of providing funding designated for particular programme activities. Unit I had particular difficulties in the area of programmatic funding and was looking to the members of Central Committee and the churches for advice and assistance in raising additional funding.

The Central Committee received the report of Unit I Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF UNIT II COMMITTEE

CHURCHES IN MISSION: HEALTH, EDUCATION, WITNESS

Dr Nababan, presiding, invited Dr Marion Best to present the report.

Dr Best indicated that the report was a record of the deliberations of the Unit Committee, containing significant recommendations and requests that were being shared for information. Action was however required on the Statement entitled *The Impact of HIV/AIDS and the Churches' Response*, on which work had been commissioned by Central Committee at its meeting in Johannesburg in January 1994.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Unit II Committee received with appreciation the minutes of the Unit II Executive Group meeting, held in Geneva in June 1996, and the report of the Unit Executive Director, Rev. Ana Langerak.

2. Conference on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME): *Called to One Hope: The Gospel in Diverse Cultures*

2.1 The Unit Committee welcomed plans for the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism. Specific elements were identified, such as the significance of the venue, the innovative introductory process and the proposal for agreement on mission and evangelism understandings and commitments at the end of the conference.

2.2 The Unit Committee noted that the conference is at the same time an event for deliberation of issues, a platform for dialogue, and an instrument for giving visibility and continuity to the churches' commitment to world mission.

2.3 The Unit Committee made the following recommendations to staff, that:

- at the conclusion of the CWME, in addition to the report and a conference message for use in local congregations, the outcomes be used to produce a study guide for local use and an issue of IRM on mission in the 21st century;
- the insights of the CWME should be used as a basis for dialogue on mission with mission agencies and other churches and faiths not represented at the conference.

3. Culmination Stage of the Gospel and Cultures Study

3.1 The Unit Committee noted that the study has emphasized the importance for faith of the identity of people within their own context. The Committee recognizes the extensive work carried out and the number of pamphlets and printed material - "little books" series - now available.

The Unit Committee therefore recommended to staff that:

- the insights of the study be shared with agencies which are involved in cross-cultural mission;
- more churches should be encouraged to be involved in the study, especially at local level.

The Unit Committee acknowledged the involvement of REOs and NCCs in the study process. Other contributions, such as studies done on this theme by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) had also been significant. Continued consultation should take place about the responsibility for the items listed above. Unit II staff responsibility should be limited to stimulating and coordinating.

Dr Best expressed particular thanks to Rev. Dr Christopher Duraisingh, who was responsible for the Gospel and Cultures Study, who would leave the World Council of Churches once the study was completed.

4. Statement on Common Witness

4.1 The Unit Committee noted that this statement aimed at promoting responsible relationships in mission and rejecting proselytism.

4.2 The Unit Committee noted that this document would be discussed at the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism and presented to Central Committee in 1997.

5. Ecumenical Statement on Mission and Evangelism

5.1 The Unit Committee noted the preparatory work that had been undertaken for a new statement on Mission and Evangelism.

5.2 After the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, the mission statement would be formulated and presented to the Central Committee in

1997 for adoption and for proposals regarding the follow-up process towards the Assembly in 1998.

Mr Lodberg, referring to a point made in the European Regional Meeting, asked whether any list was available citing the kinds of movements that are currently involved in mission in Eastern and Central Europe, and what their relationship was to the Council and its member churches. Ms Langerak said this question had been raised also in a recent consultation on international relationships in mission where the Unit was asked to focus some attention on the matter. A number of institutes and organisations were better equipped for this kind of study, and any such effort would be strongly supported by the Unit.

6. Mission and Evangelism in Unity

6.1 The Unit Committee affirmed the centrality of mission in the WCC and endorsed the following programmatic directions:

- emphasis on the centrality of evangelism, which includes facilitating innovative methods and new forms of evangelism;
- developing Orthodox studies and relationships in mission as well as strengthening partnerships with Roman Catholics in mission;
- enabling ecumenical and missionary formation, especially for the laity, and within seminaries and theological faculties as well as developing resource material for local use.

The General Secretary expressed particular thanks to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU) of the Roman Catholic Church, represented at this meeting of Central Committee by Msgr John Radano and Msgr John Mutiso-Mbinda, for their continuing commitment to this partnership. This was manifested in particular by the provision of the services of a Roman Catholic staff member based in Unit II. Sister Monica Cooney was a respected staff colleague who would shortly be leaving the Council, but a successor had been appointed to join the staff team, and for this the Unit was grateful.

7. Study Document on International Relationships in Mission

7.1 The Unit Committee received information about the study undertaken. Some of the issues listed include:

- history of ecumenical discussions on relationships in mission;

- restructuring of mission;
- identification of new mission movements in the South;
- recognition of proselytism as a painful reality for many churches.

The Unit Committee commended the study, and affirmed that monitoring and mediating in international relationships in mission - with the development of appropriate mechanisms for exercising mutual accountability - be seen as essential functions of the WCC.

8. Education

8.1 The Unit Committee reaffirmed the priorities of the Unit's Education programmes - Christian nurture, empowerment, equipping and enabling.

8.2 The Unit Committee received the minutes of the Mandated Working Group on Education, affirmed the centrality of education in the life of the WCC, and encouraged that this receive focus and visibility.

8.3 The Unit Committee recommended that the Staff Coordinating Team on Education be encouraged to complete an evaluation of the present processes and structures and prepare clear proposals for future development to be fed into the discussions on the CUV and any restructuring of the WCC.

8.4 The Unit Committee requested the Assembly Planning Committee to include a Hearing on education at the Eighth Assembly in Harare.

9. Health Issues

9.1 The Unit Committee affirmed developments in working with other agencies and networks as in the case of the Pharmaceutical Programme and the Community Based Health Care Programme.

9.2 The Unit Committee made the following recommendations on current and future directions in the area of Health:

- networking and collaboration with health agencies, WHO, and other international agencies and churches;
- follow-up on issues related to health, healing and wholeness that arise as a result of the Gospel and Cultures study and the CWME;
- continuing commitment to publish *Contact*;
- follow-up to the HIV/AIDS study.

9.3 Since the Executive Staff complement of 4.6 persons related to health, healing and wholeness issues would be reduced to 1.6 persons by July 1997, staffing assignments in the Unit should be reviewed so that current and future directions may continue to receive appropriate follow-up and attention.

10. Community and Justice/URM

10.1 The Unit Committee affirmed the general direction and effectiveness of this programme. The Unit found inspiration and life in the experiences of other people, especially those in pain, sharing a common faith through solidarity in the struggle for justice and transformation, thereby contributing to the churches' understanding of mission.

11. Other concerns

11.1 - The Unit Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the constitutional identity and integrity of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism needed to be safeguarded during the process of structural changes in consultation with the affiliated bodies.

11.2 - Decisions about the future of Bossey should be made only after consultation with Unit II where responsibility for education lies.

11.3 - The Unit Committee expressed its thanks for the work of the staff in all the above areas. Appreciation was especially expressed to those staff who would be leaving the Unit before the next Central Committee meeting.

Bishop Rogerson was grateful for the reference to CWME constitutional matters and asked the General Secretary to explain how other sectors which also have their own by-laws would be seen in terms of the restructuring.

Dr Raiser agreed that the issue needed careful consideration, but felt it should be approached in the same way as in the former process of reorganisation. It was important to clarify first the principles that should safeguard the specific concerns of those sectors and then spell out what this means in terms of constitutional implications. We should seek the emerging principles and then, together with partners, establish the constitutional structure and by-laws. The Constitution should not be seen as a limiting element.

12. Common Understanding and Vision (CUV)

Dr Best indicated that the Unit Committee had given its comments regarding CUV to the General Secretariat Committee but had not included them in the written report. She gave a summary of the points made as follows:

- appreciation was expressed that mission has a more central place in the second version of the CUV document than in the first;
- the place of mission/evangelism within WCC in the future was affirmed - it must be very present and visible;
- further consideration was encouraged on the essential inter-relatedness of the search for justice and peace and the search for visible unity as new structures are developed;
- education and unity are the two under-girding perspectives of what Unit II does. The centrality of education not only needs affirmation in terms of its being a historic commitment; it is an urgent contemporary need;
- education needs an integral approach which is based on how learning actually takes place. Ongoing educational processes should be rooted in people's experience, inclusive and creative;
- any reductions in levels of representation in governing bodies must not threaten the inclusive and participatory community which has been developing over recent years;
- the Unit believes that effective mission and inclusive community are inter-dependent.

13. Statement on HIV/AIDS

13.1 The Unit Committee made the following recommendations:

- *that the final report of the Consultative Group on AIDS, which was received by the Unit Committee, be welcomed by Central Committee and commended to the member churches for study;*
- *that the "Statement on the Impact of HIV/AIDS and the Churches' Response", be adopted by the Central Committee, as amended by the Unit II Committee (see final text - Appendix III).*

The Central Committee agreed.

The Central Committee received the report of the Unit II Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF UNIT III COMMITTEE: JUSTICE, PEACE AND CREATION

Dr Nababan, presiding, invited Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann, co-moderator of the Unit III Committee, to present the report.

Dr Kässmann began by commending staff for the substantial progress made in identifying key issues towards the assembly. She also expressed appreciation for the Moderator's report which was encouraging to Unit III in its continuing work on the question of ethnicity.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Unit Committee recommended that priorities of Unit III for the period up to the Eighth Assembly be: Theology of Life, the Programme to Overcome Violence, Youth, and the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

1.2 Concern was expressed about the financial and staffing situation, especially with regard to the departure of a number of female staff.

2. Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC

The following comments were made:

2.1 The text did not adequately reflect the spirit and language of the Life and Work tradition in the ecumenical movement;

2.2 The Committee suggested some amendments to the CUV document, which were shared with the General Secretariat Committee and those working on the revised text;

2.3 The Committee believed that the document lacked a sufficiently Trinitarian understanding of relationships;

2.4 The document did not reflect the continuing debate in the ecumenical movement on questions of who are the people of God, who is the Church, what signs of *ecclesia* can be found outside the institutional church, and how do Christians relate to people of other faiths. The results of the Ecclesiology and Ethics study process were a valuable resource (cf. Report of Unit I Committee). In general it was considered that the document was too inward looking;

2.5 The Committee regretted that the expression of the vision of the Council was so heavily influenced by financial considerations. Finance should not govern our future life together;

2.6 Decentralization of some programmes seemed in some cases to provide a possibility for participation and for fulfilling some priorities which may otherwise be lost;

2.7 The Unit Committee encouraged the Council and its member churches to make a deliberate effort to incorporate youth and young adults in their discussions of the CUV.

3. Future Management Structures

The Unit Committee underscored the need for a holistic approach to re-organizing the Council in light of the current financial situation. Programme priorities must be decided upon by those responsible for programmes. Some amendments were suggested to the text of the Finance Committee document on this subject which had been shared with the Unit Committees.

4. Assembly Preparation

The Committee offered the following comments:

4.1 The recommendation in the APC report should not only call for celebration through prayer, but the churches should also be asked, each in its own place and in accordance with its own traditions and practices, to include a celebration of the Eucharist on Sunday, 20 September 1998. Such celebrations might be broadcast through the media.

4.2 The Committee welcomed the idea of *Padare*, which would give the opportunity for JPIC-related groups to participate. The possibility was raised of assisting groups who prepare exhibits but have insufficient financial means to attend.

4.3 The Assembly should give sufficient time for plenary discussion and debate. It was important that some plenaries feature keynote speakers to address central themes.

4.4 Concern was expressed about the work-load of the Unit III staff in relation to Pre-Assembly events, preparation of Hearings and Plenary presentations.

4.5 The Committee also welcomed the idea of Hearings, but asked for reconsideration of the plan to organize them according to the present unit structure. Hearings should be seen as an opportunity for Assembly delegates to be informed about the major work of the Council, much of which was organized across units.

5. Ecclesiology and Ethics

5.1 The Unit Committee welcomed the report of the third consultation in Johannesburg in June 1996, entitled *Costly Obedience*.

5.2 The Unit Committee recommended:

that the Central Committee receive with appreciation the results of the study process on "Ecclesiology and Ethics", commend them to the churches for study, urge the churches to consider seriously the questions raised, and affirm the intention of Units I and III to continue to reflect on the relation between ecclesiology and ethics.

The Central Committee agreed.

5.3 The Unit Committee expressed the hope that a consultation linking this study process to the Programme to Overcome Violence be jointly prepared in the latter part of 1997. (cf. recommendation 10.4 below).

5.4 The results of the study process should be incorporated in the continuing work on Theology of Life, the Programme to Overcome Violence and the Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women.

6. Ecumenical Study Process on Racism

The Committee received an update on this process. It encouraged wide distribution and use by the member churches of documents and study materials under preparation.

7. Programme on Indigenous Peoples

7.1 The Committee received a progress report and noted in particular the differing definitions of "indigenous" in different regions, and the need to relate this programme to the study on Gospel and Cultures.

Bishop Boseto, speaking on behalf of Indigenous Peoples, said that he saw them as part of God's design in his creation, and their identity was in relation to land, sea, and the environment. They were thus in a position to know more about sustainable development than many who do studies on the subject.

In colonial times the voices of Indigenous People were silenced, but now they could speak out and express their own opinions. In his view, the violence, the ethnicity issue, nationalism, were signs that God wanted to put the world right, and Indigenous Peoples were in the centre of the global, common vision of a better world - not in isolation but as part of the church in the world of today. Calling for sensitivity with regard to land issues, he affirmed his support for this important programme of Unit III.

7.2 The Unit Committee recommended:

- *that an Indigenous person be appointed to the Nominations Committee of the Assembly (being a delegate) and that the consultant on Indigenous Peoples serve as a resource person for this Committee;*
- *that member churches be encouraged to engage in dialogue with Indigenous Peoples in their midst, exploring critically the history of the churches' relations with Indigenous Peoples in the light of current work on Gospel and Cultures, and taking up the Jubilee challenge to restore to Indigenous Peoples or offer reparation for their historical lands currently owned by churches.*

The Central Committee agreed.

7.3 The Committee requested Unit III staff to facilitate this process by documenting and sharing existing models of reparation between churches and Indigenous Peoples.

8. Plans for the end of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women

8.1 The Unit Committee received and discussed an Update on the End of Decade Plan, and recommended:

- *that the venue of the Decade Festival be Harare, and that the Festival be held just prior to the Assembly in conjunction with the Pre-Assembly Women's Meeting (4-8 September 1998);*
- *that a "Thursday Festival Appeal" be launched globally to facilitate the participation of women in these meetings.*

8.2 The heavy burden of concluding work on the Decade, and preparations for the Eighth Assembly, required at least two full-time programme staff for this Council-wide priority located within Unit III. The Committee

requested the General Secretary, in collaboration with the Executive Director of Unit III, to seek the resources necessary to accomplish this.

Dr Kässmann pointed out that this was not the same recommendation as the one agreed upon in 1995, when it had been hoped to hold the Festival quite separately from the Assembly. This plan had not proved to be feasible.

The General Secretary reminded members of Central Committee that when the recommendation was discussed last year, those who defended the plan for the Festival gave assurance that the resources would be sought outside normal channels and that demands would not be made on the WCC's resources. He understood that there was already a good response among Christian women's organisations around the world and that a process of raising resources was underway. Various ways of mobilising the necessary staff support were being explored, and he welcomed these efforts. However, before voting on the recommendation, he wanted Central Committee members to be clear that there was no question of establishing two staff positions for this work.

In response, Dr Kässmann said the Committee was aware of the realities of the present situation, but it was their hope nevertheless that possibilities for creative ways of mobilising the necessary help would be found.

The Central Committee voted in favour of the above recommendations.

9. Youth Programme

9.1 The Committee reviewed activities being pursued by the Youth Programme, and reiterated its conviction that the Council-wide commitment to youth in the ecumenical movement is of highest priority.

9.2 The Committee affirmed possibilities of engaging consultants and interns to strengthen the Youth Programme, but cautioned against using the intern programme as a source of "cheap labour".

9.3 One of the consequences of recent staff reductions was the loss of staff in the youth team. Significant work lay immediately ahead to prepare youth for the Eighth Assembly. The Committee had designated the Youth Programme as a Unit III priority in the pre-Assembly period; in order for this to be accomplished at least two full-time programme staff were required.

The Committee therefore requested the General Secretary, in collaboration with the Executive Director of Unit III, to seek the resources necessary to accomplish this.

The General Secretary said that the need for two staff positions in the Youth Office was clear and it was the intention to seek the necessary resources to make this possible. Ms Palu urged that, in view of the fact that a man had been appointed to the Youth Office, the second person should be a woman.

Barbara Bazett regretted that the younger generation had not spoken out more on this matter and encouraged them to do so, otherwise she feared there would be no change in the present situation.

10. Programme to Overcome Violence (POV)

The Unit Committee recorded its appreciation to the Historic Peace Church Consultative Group for responding to the appeal by the Unit III Committee during its meeting in September 1995 by raising funds to provide a Peace Church Volunteer as programme assistant for two years.

On behalf of Central Committee, the General Secretary extended thanks to Dr Miller of the Church of the Brethren, and to Barbara Bazett of the Society of Friends, who represent the historic Peace Churches on Central Committee, for their assistance in mobilising backing for the provision of a peace volunteer. This was a wonderful sign of support and an example of what might be done elsewhere.

10.1 The Unit Committee endorsed the report of the Programme to Overcome Violence consultation held in Rio de Janeiro in April 1996, recommended that it be received by the Central Committee, that it be sent to and commended to the churches, and be translated into the working languages of the WCC as soon as possible.

Dr Kässmann urged members of Central Committee to read this report carefully so that they could own it for themselves and take it seriously in their own work, and that their churches be asked to do likewise. Following the request by Central Committee in 1995 that Unit III draw up detailed plans for the Programme to Overcome Violence, she noted that considerable work had been done to this end.

Further, the Unit Committee submitted its recommendations, amended as follows, to the Central Committee for adoption:

10.2 As stated by the Central Committee in 1995, the focus of the Programme to Overcome Violence should be building a culture of peace through practical means to overcome violence at different levels of society,

encouraging the churches to play a leading role in using non-violent means such as prevention, mediation, intervention and education appropriate to their particular contexts. We should however not refrain from looking at the political, economic and social root causes of violence, including the problems of structural violence;

10.3 Taking advantage of existing resources in institutes that study issues of peace, justice and environmental sustainability as well as theological schools and institutes, and regional ecumenical organizations, the programme should include studies of the causes of violence. Particular attention should be given to situations where churches or religious groups contribute to these causes;

10.4 As requested by Central Committee in 1994 and 1995, the Council should move urgently to offer reflection on the theological and ecclesiological dimensions of violence as well as the powerful resources offered by the Christian faith in building cultures of peace, as for example, in the Bible, in stories of churches and other groups of Christians engaged in creating cultures of peace with justice in their own place, and in work by theologians directly engaged with these issues (including women theologians studying violence against women, Historic Peace Churches, Evangelical and Pentecostal churches rooted in poor communities permeated by violence and announcing the Gospel, and others).

10.5 The WCC should call for the creation of a day of prayer and fasting for peace.

10.6 As noted by Central Committees in 1994 and 1995, the POV should be a clear emphasis in all units, with a specific programme being carried out in Unit III. Thus, the POV should commend and highlight the on-going work of the WCC in the General Secretariat, Unit I, II, and IV, where concrete programmes and other efforts address issues related to violence and the means to overcome it, including work in rural areas. Furthermore, the POV should embrace, affirm and strengthen on-going work in Unit III, where many programmes and all the related programme groups (ECOS, CCLA, PCR, Women, Youth, and Theology of Life) offer considerable analysis, action, and constituencies deeply involved in efforts to overcome violence.

10.7 To focus attention dramatically on the POV in the period up to the Eighth Assembly and to complement closely related on-going work in the

Council, the WCC should launch:

PEACE TO THE CITY

A Global Initiative of the World Council of Churches Programme to Overcome Violence

10.7.1 This initiative provides a symbol to engage and encourage all churches in every place to practise peace every day. The initiative should include:

- a) Choosing as many as seven cities that visibly demonstrate both the destructive force of violence as well as significant initiatives of building peace and justice. Churches and groups in various cities across different regions of the world who participate in specific, substantial work in peace-building and communities of justice may apply for their work to be highlighted in this initiative. (Church and/or ecumenical partners in as many as seven cities should be contacted as soon as possible, to test the idea and their willingness to participate in the initiative.) The criteria developed by the Board on International Affairs should be taken into account. Participants in the POV Consultation established a tentative list of possible cities in eight regions, to be narrowed to seven cities at the most;
- b) Visiting each of the cities with teams of seven people each, including at least three persons from other cities involved in the process, those with experience in local arenas and with print or broadcast media, with mediation techniques, and those with analytic skills. These team visits should take place before the 1998 Assembly in order to give visibility to efforts to overcome violence, to collect and reflect on experience and expertise, and to share hope and a spirituality for life;
- c) Developing video materials that vividly portray parts of these visits to encourage groups and churches all over the world to join the process;
- d) Encouraging and facilitating networks of mutual exchange among those working in cities to overcome violence, emphasizing methods discussed in more detail in the report of the Rio de Janeiro consultation:
- e) Offering the 1998 Assembly as an opportunity for representatives of the work in these seven (or fewer) cities to come together, joined by others at the Assembly, to sign an agenda, a commitment or a contract

publicly pledging to continue and strengthen these and other efforts towards peace with justice;

- f) Offering opportunity at the Assembly for member churches to reflect on how the World Council of Churches might facilitate their work on overcoming violence in the period after the Assembly.

Mr Rüegger expressed concern as to how this initiative - the breadth and scope of which he appreciated - could be implemented prior to the assembly. He urged Central Committee to take care not to propose activities when there was such a shortage of the necessary staff and resources to carry them out. It was also important to consider whether the member churches would be able to accept the proposal to set aside a day of fasting and prayer. He cautioned against proposing good initiatives which might prove counter-effective.

Bishop Krusche reminded participants of the dynamic way in which the idea of a Programme to Overcome Violence was first mooted in Johannesburg - a moment that would not be forgotten by those who witnessed it. At that point it was proposed as a kind of analogy with the Programme to Combat Racism. He felt the resolutions tended to be a-political, and although work would need to be done with ecclesiological and theological dimensions of violence, any attempt to look at the root causes of violence would imply involvement in the political field - this aspect should be brought out more clearly; he proposed an additional phrase to this effect.

Violence was not only physical; the violation of women's rights, of human rights, were also violent acts, said Ms Nontawasee. She saw a close link between the Decade and the POV which should be emphasised. Bishop Neill agreed with the proposals but felt that they were too detailed for a Committee this size to handle; he would prefer them to be more general.

Dr Love regretted that the report of the Rio de Janeiro consultation had reached Central Committee members so late that they had not had opportunity to study the recommendations prior to being asked to approve them. As one of those involved in shaping this programme, she pointed out that one of the creative reasons for focusing on the City was that it is deeply political - centres of power, economic, social, cultural, etc. are all located there. People's homes are in the city - but there is no safe space where they can live in safety any more. A multitude of different kinds of violence can be found in the city, which people can talk about with the ecumenical team, and suggest ways of contributing to this programme.

Mr Allsop cited the tragic expression of violence when 35 people in a rural community in Tasmania were shot dead earlier this year. Although Australians did not see themselves as a violent society, at least not in terms of war, they were beginning to recognise the degree to which violence had infiltrated their culture, and society had become increasingly influenced by violence experienced in everyday life. Any assistance in dealing with this issue would be welcomed.

Barbara Bazett believed that support for this programme, Peace to the City, would be forthcoming from church agencies in cities; she felt the proposals were practical and feasible and urged Central Committee to approve them. Dr Philip pointed out that the basic long-term way of working to eradicate violence was to ensure that children grow up in families, as long as these provide a safe and happy environment.

There are many kinds of violence, both visible and hidden, said Dr Papas, drawing attention to the fact that in certain regions, psychological violence - violence against the mind - was increasingly exercised by the media. Ms Gcabashe pleaded that some mention be included of domestic violence, especially violence against women, which was also on the increase. Mr Kirov added that the problem of violence against Christians in Eastern Europe and in the Islamic world was causing much suffering.

The Moderator drew attention to the reference to "studies of the causes of violence" which he felt was a crucial point and the one that needed addressing above all. Overcoming violence meant dealing with its root causes. Today, many organisations were concerned about overcoming violence; so what was specific about the WCC's Programme to Overcome Violence? We were witnessing the decay of spiritual values: that was at the heart of the situation that generates violence, and had to be addressed.

Responding to the comments, Dr Kässmann pointed out that the intention behind the planned visits to the Cities was not simply to repeat to the world how bad the situation was with regard to violence; rather, by highlighting the root causes of violence, the intention was to encourage churches, urging them to take action, not simply to watch violence happen and regret the fact. We must call the churches to their peace responsibility and help them play a leading role in overcoming violence.

With regard to staffing, there was one full-time staff member and a consultant, who would be supported by a reference group. Since POV was one of the major foci of the Unit, it was hoped that other staff would also be able

to give some assistance in order to accomplish the tasks that had been set.

In response to Bishop Krusche, Dr Kässmann expressed the hope that the Programme would indeed become highly political - this was part of the intention behind the Peace to the Cities initiative.

The Central Committee, after careful consideration, and taking the above recommendations one by one, **voted in favour** of the recommendations regarding the implementation of the Programme to Overcome Violence. Dr Kässmann expressed appreciation for this acceptance of the proposals, and in particular underlined the fact that this positive vote meant agreement to launch the campaign "Peace to the City" with its exciting implications.

The Central Committee received the report of the Unit III Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF UNIT IV COMMITTEE: SHARING AND SERVICE

The Moderator, His Holiness Aram, presiding, invited Bishop Gomez as co-moderator of the Unit IV Committee to present the report. He began by noting that Central Committee would be asked to take four actions.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Unit IV Committee recognized that *diakonia*, *martyria* and *koinonia* are essential elements of the central mission of the church. *Koinonia* without *diakonia* is dead. Sharing and service as practical actions are at the heart of our fellowship and are a source of our unity.

1.2 For many churches within the ecumenical fellowship today, the search for unity in the church and the world means struggling for truth and justice in the places where they live, engaging in practical acts of solidarity where human dignity and community are at stake, empowering individuals and communities to confront the forces of fragmentation and marginalization.

Action 1:

The Unit IV Committee recommended that the World Council of Churches articulate its continued commitment to ecumenical diakonia as expressed in:

- *promoting justice,*
- *practical actions of solidarity,*
- *capacity building and empowerment, and*
- *networking and advocacy.*

These mandates are interrelated and essential and serve the unity and witness of the churches; therefore the Unit IV Committee recommended to Central Committee that this be articulated more specifically in any listing of the purposes and functions of the WCC, for example in the Common Understanding and Vision document.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the above recommendation.

2. Common Understanding and Vision (CUV)

2.1 The Unit IV Committee devoted one day to discussing and formulating comments and recommendations for the Common Understanding and Vision process. Proposed revisions to the CUV draft document were submitted to the General Secretariat and are included below.

2.2 The Committee expressed appreciation for the CUV process.

2.3 It welcomed the opportunity for a broad participation of churches and partners in the discussion of the draft document and offered the following comments and recommendations as a contribution to its revision:

2.4 The Committee recommended the strengthening of the affirmation that the ultimate goal of the ecumenical movement is both the unity of the church and the integrity of the whole creation.

2.5 The Committee affirmed the integrity of the ecumenical movement. Faith and Order, Life and Work, worship and mission, service and fellowship: they are one and inseparable.

2.6 The Committee recommended that in the CUV document the relationship between ecumenical reflection and practical actions of solidarity be given greater attention and visibility.

2.7 The Committee recognized that *diakonia*, *martyria* and *koinonia* are essential elements of the central mission of the church. *Koinonia* without *diakonia* is dead. Sharing and service as practical actions are at the heart of our fellowship and a source of our unity. The Unit IV Committee

recommended that this be articulated more specifically in any listing of purposes and functions of the WCC.

2.8 The Committee recommended that the WCC, in its CUV document, articulate the World Council's commitment to justice, to practical actions of solidarity, capacity building and empowerment, and networking and advocacy as being interrelated and essential for the unity and witness of the churches.

2.9 The Committee reaffirmed mediation and advocacy as important tasks for the World Council of Churches and recommended that these tasks be carried out from the perspective of concrete life experiences of people at the local level.

2.10 The Committee recognized the existence of a complex network of ecumenical relationships, mutual responsibilities and expectations involving the existing structures of the WCC. Sudden change or disruption would have serious implications beyond the Council itself. The Unit Committee recommended that this be taken into account in any discussion of future structures and profile of the WCC.

2.11 The Committee recommended further definition of the practical implications for the work of the WCC of the deepening of the relationship with the Roman Catholic Church, both at local and international level.

2.12 The Unit Committee recommended that consideration be given to the importance of relating to and cooperating with people of other faiths, particularly in response to human need.

3. Strategy for Jubilee - Phase II

3.1 The Unit IV Committee reflected on the implications of the Common Understanding and Vision process for the Jubilee Strategy (adopted by Central Committee in 1995) and on the work of sharing and service within the life of the WCC. The Strategy for Jubilee was further elaborated by the Committee.

3.2 The Unit Committee recognized the central importance of continuing and developing the functions of sharing and service as an integral part of the mandate of the WCC.

3.3 The Committee commended to Central Committee the continued

implementation of the Strategy for Jubilee, based on the following mandates:

- To promote the commitment to justice
- To promote practical actions of solidarity
- To promote capacity building and empowerment
- To promote networking and advocacy

The shift in emphasis by the Unit, from implementation to the enhancement and facilitation of the churches' own involvement and actions with the poor and excluded, was involving considerable adjustments in the Unit's working style and methods (the creation of ACT and the renewal of the Round Table System were just two examples of this).

Action 2

With a view to the future profile of the World Council of Churches, the Unit Committee recommended that Unit IV - Sharing and Service continue to further sharpen its role as "enabler, coordinator, communicator, convenor and mediator" in very practical ways:

- a) to enable agreements between churches and ecumenical partners or agencies in specialized areas of work, such as emergencies (ACT);*
- b) to coordinate conduct, policy and practice in the ecumenical sharing of resources;*
- c) to gather and communicate information and data which will help partners to work together more effectively;*
- d) to convene and facilitate Round Tables and other mechanisms put into place by the WCC, its member churches and related councils and agencies, which will ensure:*
 - *the common understanding of and agreement on priority issues in the churches' witness and service;*
 - *the commitment of a relevant number of partners to act - on behalf of the whole fellowship - on those priorities, and*
 - *the mutual accountability of all partners involved with regard to the respective tasks which they have committed themselves to.*

Dr Granberg-Michaelson was grateful for the careful reflection by Unit IV on its goals in the light of the CUV process. He pointed out that the four

goals indicated above were in fact embraced by the World Council as a whole and were being carried out in concrete ways by Units II and III, for example, through their networks, which do not necessarily relate to each other. He urged that the Executive Committee be asked to help prepare the future discussion, thinking forward as to how the Council's activities can be carried out in the period after the assembly, starting in 1997 rather than in 1999.

The Central Committee **agreed** to the above recommendation.

4. Churches' Solidarity with Uprooted People

Bishop Gomez noted that a report on action taken around the world in response to the statement adopted by Central Committee in 1995 had been distributed, together with a brochure urging the churches to face the challenge presented by the statement and to make full use of 1997 which had been designated *Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People*.

At this point a video was shown; it had been made during this meeting of Central Committee, asking some **Hard Questions** of members from different parts of the world, working in different spheres, about the efforts they and their churches had been able to make so far in response to the Statement on Uprooted People.

4.1 In September 1995, the Central Committee had adopted unanimously the Statement on Uprooted People, *A Moment to Choose: Risking to be with Uprooted People*. It also adopted four related resolutions, including one designating 1997 as the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People. The Central Committee had called on member churches and related agencies "to study and affirm the document, to manifest the commitment of the churches to be on the side of uprooted people by witnessing and serving at all levels of the life of the churches, and to submit a progress report to the General Secretary by mid-1997 on actions taken" (CC minutes 1995, p.172).

4.2 Since then, numerous member churches and related agencies had initiated new efforts in solidarity with the uprooted and many have begun to plan special activities for 1997. The WCC Refugee and Migration Service has focused on assisting and building the capacity of member churches to engage with the issues and to implement the recommendations. However, other member churches have yet to engage actively in following up the Central Committee statement, its recommendations, and the accompanying resolutions.

The Central Committee voted in favour of the following action:

Action 3:

- a) *On recommendation of the Unit IV Committee, the Central Committee commended the many churches which have already responded for the actions they have taken so far in implementing the recommendations of the WCC Statement on Uprooted People and the related Central Committee resolutions;*
- b) *Further, the Central Committee urged all WCC member churches and related organizations to mobilise resources and organize activities to mark 1997 as the Ecumenical Year of Churches in Solidarity with Uprooted People.*

5. Ecumenical Action in Advocating for the Rights of Children

5.1 The effects of global, social and economic changes today have dramatic consequences on the daily life of children and adolescents, as well as on their future. Marginalization, abandonment, abuse and sexual exploitation of children and other forms of violence are increasing worldwide.

5.2 In the light of this reality, many organizations and some churches have taken initiatives to respond to specific issues and to promote children's rights. It is clear that churches can and should do more to respond in an effective way to the dramatic situation affecting our children, taking care to address root causes.

5.3 Following the September 1995 Central Committee approval to give priority to the rights of children, Unit IV invited children and adults to a small *International Consultation on the Rights of Children* in Geneva in May 1996.

5.4 From their practical experiences, the participants in this consultation identified the main causes of child exploitation and discussed strategies for effective ecumenical action in support of the rights of children. The presence of children from children's organizations and projects made more visible the dramatic and violent situation affecting the lives of so many children. It also revealed the tremendous capacity of these children to analyze their situation and to articulate strategies for action.

Bishop Gomez introduced two of the children who had attended the International Consultation on the Rights of Children: Ashtha Tuladhar from Nepal and Craig Kielburger from Canada. The resolution below was an attempt to recognise the work that children themselves were doing at local level to overcome their problems and to be sensitive to the energy and desire that children have to work together to ensure that the universal rights of children all over the world can be honoured. Craig and Ashtha were then interviewed to see how they became involved in the struggle against the exploitation of children.

Ashtha had known nothing about child rights until her school was invited to send her as a representative to a seminar for children from different areas of Nepal, including street children, weavers, and domestic workers. Through UNICEF Nepal she met other kids, became interested in what they were experiencing, and so became involved herself. These children of different backgrounds shared their problems, found how different their lifestyles were, many suffering from exploitation. After the initial shock at what they learned, they began to understand each other's problems and tried to seek solutions. They formed a group and asked UNICEF to support them; now they have established networks in various districts of Nepal and try to keep children all over the country informed about child rights. They are anxious to join hands with other children of the world and are glad that the WCC is willing to help them. Although she is a Buddhist, Ashtha believed it was important to work with people of other faiths.

Craig had read an article in a local newspaper about the murder of a young Pakistani boy, describing the conditions he faced as a carpet weaver working 12 hours a day. He escaped and told people about this exploitation; when he was 12 years old he was murdered. Craig was also 12 at the time, and was shocked by the difference between his life and that of this Pakistani boy. He did some research and found this was anything but an isolated case - that 200 million children work as child labourers all over the world. So he got involved, gathering a group of his friends to try and do something about the situation of children in other parts of the world.

Craig concluded with a message for the adults he was addressing: "believe in us as young people. Don't be afraid to challenge us and don't underestimate who we are and what we can do. Because our generation may just surprise you!"

In discussion, Ms Nontawasee referred to the World Congress against the Commercial Sex Exploitation of Children - the first time governments, NGOs and the UN had come together to fight against the abuse and exploitation of

children. The Congress endorsed the creation of the Rights of the Child. She hoped this action proposed by Unit IV would receive the strong support of the WCC.

Ms Santana said she had had the privilege of co-chairing this International Consultation on the Rights of Children - one of the most humbling, enriching and challenging experiences of her ecumenical journey, and one in which she wished more Central Committee members could have participated. Today, when so many children were not even safe within their families and homes, or were forced to leave home, the least we could do was continue in the direction of advocacy and empowerment and enabling this networking of the children of the world.

The Central Committee voted in favour of the following action:

Action 4:

Responding to the dramatic and violent situation in which millions of children around the world live, and the urgent request from children for the churches' commitment and spiritual leadership in the search for solutions to their problems, on recommendation of the Unit IV Committee, the Central Committee adopted the following resolutions:

- a) to call on member churches and related agencies to continue to mobilize their human, moral and material resources to defend and protect the life and integrity of children;*
- b) to request Unit IV to continue supporting advocacy work and networking for the rights of children with the direct involvement of children's organizations around the world.*

Bishop Gomez concluded his presentation by expressing thanks to the co-moderator, Ms Jarjour, and members of the Committee, as well as to Unit staff for their work and good stewardship of resources in a time of financial crisis.

The Central Committee received the report of Unit IV Committee with appreciation.

REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Dr Nababan, presiding, invited Ms Birgitta Rantakari, moderator of the Finance Committee, to present the report. Ms Rantakari noted that the first priority had been to balance the 1997 budget, and this had been achieved with the exception of the cost for 1997 of the staff separation package.

1. Financial Update

1.1 The General Secretary attended part of the meeting and informed the Committee about developments since they last met. He spoke of the steps taken to reduce the anticipated deficit in the current year and to achieve a balanced budget for 1997. In his analysis of the nature of the financial crisis facing the Council, he said that he did not believe this arose from mishandling or mismanagement; controls on expenditure were tightly enforced. Perhaps the Council had followed misleading advice. However, the fundamental issue was the structural change taking place in the handling of funds. Fewer "public" funds were available; the effects of "structural adjustment" were being felt, and the WCC could not expect to be protected from the effects of such changes.

1.2 Analysis showed a total income of CHF 118 million in 1991, whilst the projected income in 1997 was CHF 60 million - a decline of almost 50%. In the meantime, fund balances were being utilised to cover the shortfall in income, so there was little invested income to distribute. The Units therefore had fewer resources available and were less able to pay "redistributed costs", which fund the General Secretariat and the support services for the Council as a whole. Also, there was insufficient undesignated income from membership contributions to meet the costs of those sectors dependent on it.

1.3 Staff had made every effort to make the 1997 budget fit the anticipated income, but had not yet been entirely successful. Operating expenses had been pruned wherever possible and reductions made in the overall level of staff benefits. Further, there had been a reduction of 46.5 full-time-equivalent core staff positions (almost 20%). Budget savings of CHF 7.7 million had been made so far (6.6 million of which were in staff related costs), but a further CHF 1.3 million still had to be found.

1.4 It was essential that the budget be balanced. Action included reviewing and implementing the Income Development Strategy (*Providing the Resources*, CC minutes 1992, Appendix IX); beginning to rebuild fund

balances and reserves; revising the budget process especially as it relates to the level of shared costs. The General Secretary was seeking advice and support at governing body level to resolve the situation.

2. Financial Report and Accounts 1995

2.1 The report indicated that income again fell short of budget, resulting in a reduction in general funds of CHF 9.9 million. Of this, CHF 4.4 million represented a decrease in the general funds of Units II, III and IV, the remainder in general funds of the Council as a whole. Programme Activity funds decreased by CHF 17.4 million, but this should not be viewed as a deficit since these funds were used for the purposes for which they were given, including the transfer of CHF 6.8 million emergencies funds to ACT (Action by Churches Together). Reserves and other funds (such as the Assembly Fund) saw little variation. The overdraft of CHF 19.5 million at the end of 1995 had been reduced to below CHF 10 million.

On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee agreed:

- a. *to approve the Financial Report and Accounts for 1995;*
- b. *that Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler, SA (KPMG), be re-appointed auditors for the 1996 accounts of the World Council of Churches.*

3. Financial position in 1996

The Finance Committee received a detailed report on the first half of the current year. General income would probably be half-a-million below budget for the year. The special meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee in March, in approving a revised 1996 budget, asked that expenditure be cut by 10%. Since a high proportion of operating costs were personnel related and most staff have a six months' notice period, savings took time to implement. However, the half-year figures indicated that expenditure was running at 40-50% and costs would decrease as the staff restructuring policy took effect. The General Secretariat cost had been reduced by CHF 400,000 by the discontinuation of the annual general budget contribution to the Assembly Fund.

4. Income Trends

4.1 A comprehensive report was received from the Director of OICD on income trends and projections. The period 1990-1998 is shown in figure 1 below.

YEAR	UDI	GENERAL	ACTIVITIES	INVESTMENT	TOTAL
1990	5,853	27,041	78,869	5,387	116,950
1991	6,028	27,511	79,900	4,631	118,070
1992	6,551	27,083	72,849	3,384	109,867
1993	6,649	27,583	62,497	8,178	104,907
1994	6,366	20,906	64,504	-9,089	82,687
1995	6,267	20,228	57,795	-3,202	81,088
1996	6,300	18,740	52,693	0.00	77,733
1997	6,280	18,416	36,230	0.00	60,926
1998	6,200	17,846	36,730	0.00	60,776

Figure 1 - 1990-5 actuals - 1996-8 OICD projections.

4.2 The situation showed that total income reduced by one-third in the five years to 1995 (from CHF 120 million to 80 million) and seemed likely to diminish further to CHF 60 million by 1997/98. A halving of the Council's overall income would have a profound effect on its work. This problem was made worse by the fact that there was an enormous imbalance between undesignated income (CHF 6.27 million in 1995, mostly membership contributions, which the Council is free to use for its basic work) and designated income (CHF 58 million in 1995, which the Council has to use in defined areas or for specific activities).

4.3 The fact that such a high proportion of its resources depended on the popularity of particular programmes and not on a real commitment to the Council's core ecumenical mandate made the Council very vulnerable. A minimum of CHF 10 million undesignated income was required to safeguard its core work. The reduction in invested funds meant that Units could no longer rely on interest to balance their budgets.

4.4 The Finance Committee was grateful for the more comprehensive information about income now available through SCALA, the new accounting system. It felt the time had come for a review of the income development strategy approved in 1992: in particular, matters relating to

membership commitments and contributions should be pursued. Perhaps additional income should be more vigorously sought for sectors like Faith and Order, Relationships, Communications and Bossey, which could not be fully resourced from undesignated income. Donors were still concerned about an apparent duplication of work by ecumenical organisations, particularly those in the Ecumenical Centre.

5. Preliminary 1998 Budget

5.1 The Finance Committee received a first draft of the 1998 budget, showing a shortfall of CHF 2.5 million. More work being necessary on this, it was not communicated to Central Committee at this time.

On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee

- c. *noted that a preliminary budget for 1998 had been submitted to the Finance Committee but that this would need amendment to take into account developments in the CUV process and consequent changes to be recommended in the structures of the Council;*

instructed the Finance Committee to bring a balanced budget for 1998 to its meeting in September 1997.

6. Eighth Assembly Budget

6.1 The Finance Committee noted the fifth draft budget, showing the reduction of budgeted expenditure to CHF 11 million due to the suspension of annual contributions from the Council's general funds to the Assembly. It also noted an "alternative Geneva budget", drawn up to demonstrate that the cost of transferring the Assembly to Geneva in an emergency would be unlikely to cost more than the Harare Assembly.

6.2 On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee

- d. *approved the Fifth Draft of the Eighth Assembly budget, with expenditure limited to CHF 11 million (see Appendix VIII)*

In response to a question, Mr Davies explained that the reduction in the assembly budget was mainly in the amount set aside for contingencies. Usually this came to some 10% of the budget but was now at 2.1% only. As the assembly approached, some amounts could be quantified more accurately, and this might also help reduce the total. The reduction was necessary due

to the fact that the annual transfer from general funds had had to be suspended (up to 1995 this amounted to CH 400,000 p.a.).

Dr Turner asked what would happen if income did not meet the expenses. Mr Davies replied that if a shortfall were anticipated, some expenditure would have to be reduced. He was encouraged by the pledges and contributions received so far, although a gap still remained. In addition, an amount had accumulated on the assembly account from previous years that was brought forward; it could be used if necessary, although it was felt that a reasonable balance should be carried forward if possible, since some initial expenses for an assembly need to be met before the pledges began to come in.

Dr Robbins asked why the exchange rate of 1.25 CHF to the US\$ was being used for the assembly budget, when it had been agreed to take the rate of 1.20 for the general budget. Mr Davies pointed out that the Zimbabwe economy was linked more to the US dollar and expenses would be in dollar terms more than was the case in Geneva.

With regard to accommodation costs at the University, the General Secretary indicated that the contract would be signed once the University was in a position to quote definite figures for 1998.

7. Income Development matters

7.1 Mr Rath, director of OICD, reported on income development concerns. He mentioned the General Secretary's Donor Consultation in May when several key funding partners were challenged to assist the Council in two capital appeals, one to fund the staff separation costs (CHF 2 million) and the other to meet the cost of essential renovations to the Ecumenical Centre. A total of CHF 420,000 had been pledged for the former (reducing the amortisation charge in the budget), while it was hoped that the Swiss Federal and Cantonal authorities would make a grant towards the latter.

7.2 Assembly income and pledges: nearly CHF 1 million had been received and CHF 6 million pledged towards a target of CHF 8 million, comparing favourably with the CHF 5.1 million received and pledged eighteen months prior to the Canberra Assembly.

7.3 In the light of these reports, and on recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee

- e. *noted the suggestion that local congregations might be asked to make a special offering or contribution to mark the Council's 50th Anniversary and encouraged OICD to consult with OCER, the Office of Communications and the Assembly Planning Committee about how the 50th Anniversary might be used for fund-raising;*
- f. *noted the report of the Finance Committee with regard to payments and pledges for the Eighth Assembly and urged all member churches which have not yet made any commitment at all to do so as soon as possible.*

8. Ecumenical Development Initiative (EDI)

8.1 Dr A. Pennybacker reported to the Finance Committee, supplementing a detailed written report. The Archbishop Iakovos Endowment had pledges amounting to \$682,500. A quarterly newsletter was sent to 700 friends of Bossey. Gifts of \$14,666 and pledges of \$8,000 had been received, plus a single gift of \$200,000 to fund a scholarship, while four persons have included Bossey in their wills. \$270,000 in gifts and pledges had been received by the Fund for Ecumenism. EDI had recently been involved in the "Burnt Churches Fund", which had attracted \$ 6 million in gifts and pledges and another \$ 3 million gifts in kind to support and help rebuild the 120 churches destroyed in racial attacks in the USA. Invested funds relating to the WCC amounted to \$294,902.

8.2 While income from investments in 1996 would be small, it was anticipated that income in respect to Bossey would amount to over \$10,000 by mid-1997 and that there would also be some income due for Faith and Order. In addition, \$60,000 had been forwarded to Bossey for the African American leadership seminar in 1995. Other WCC income in 1995 amounted to \$1,256 and would be remitted next year with the income due for 1996. Although progress remained slow, Dr Pennybacker believed that EDI had growing visibility and credibility in the USA. While much of this was centred on national projects, it was hoped that it would spin off onto WCC projects; the building up of a large number of Friends of Bossey was perhaps the most encouraging development.

Bishop Koppe expressed particular concern about the situation of Bossey in the future if it continued to receive reduced subsidies from WCC undesignated funds. Mr Davies pointed out that Bossey was still receiving a subsidy but had been requested to reduce its budget for 1997 by a further CHF 200,000.

9. Future Management Structures of the WCC

The Finance Committee received a paper outlining suggested changes in the structure of the General Secretariat and management of the Council; this was also considered by the Unit Committees and the General Secretariat Committee. (see Report of the GS Committee (p.83ff).

10. A Financial Plan

The Finance Committee learned that in response to the request by the Central Committee in 1995 for a financial strategy for the period up to the next Assembly, the Executive Committee had set up a small Financial Strategy Working Group which had already begun work on the draft plan prepared by staff. This work would continue, including work on the 1998 budget, and the Group would report to the Executive Committee in February and to Central Committee in September 1997.

11. The Finance Sub-Committee

of the Executive Committee had had a special meeting in March 1996 when a number of urgent matters were considered. Some specific concerns relating to Investment and Exchange Policy, the need for equalisation reserves for investment income, and the need to review income development strategy, had been referred to the Finance Strategy Working Group for further consideration and action.

12. Retirement Fund Board

The mandate of the present Board would expire in March 1997 and Central Committee was requested to appoint its representatives. On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee

- g. *appointed Ms Birgitta Rantakari, Prof. Anna Marie Aagaard and Mr John Briggs as its representatives on the Retirement Fund Board from March 1997 and requested the Executive Committee to fill the remaining vacancy in February 1997.*

13. Ecumenical News International

A request had been received from the ENI Advisory Board for a renewal of the WCC's contribution for a further period of three years from 1997. On recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Central Committee

- h. *approved the request of the ENI Advisory Board for a renewal of the Council's funding commitment, at the existing level (CHF 650,000pa), for a further period of three years from 1997.*

14. Revised Budget 1997

The Finance Committee considered the recommendation from the Executive Committee reaffirming that the 1997 budget must be balanced, and instructing the Finance Sub-Committee to present a balanced budget to the Executive Committee in February 1997 for approval (using the exchange rate of CHF 1.20 for the US dollar).

The Finance Strategy Working Group worked on the revised budget and proposed savings in undesignated income dependent sectors amounting to CHF 539,000, and in redistributed cost dependent sectors amounting to CHF 480,000. The 1997 budget was therefore balanced with the exception of the amount needed to cover the cost of the staff separation plan. In 1996 this would amount to CHF 1.6 million; CHF 425,000 had been pledged by five donors, leaving an annual charge of CHF 235,000 p.a. for each of the next five years. The total required up to the Assembly was likely to total CHF 2 million.

Ms Rantakari explained that, if Central Committee approved the revised 1997 budget, the details would be worked on further. Restructuring would come under the CUV process but it was necessary to consider the financial consequences of any decisions as they became clear. Suggestions for savings had been proposed in administrative and governing body items in the Units and Offices, but each was free to find the savings in the most acceptable way - thus the decision lay with them. No further diminution of staff was currently being considered.

However, the crisis was not yet over: there was a CHF 2.5 million shortfall on the preliminary 1998 budget. A minimum of CHF 10 million was required in undesignated funding (UDI) otherwise it would be impossible to sustain the current infrastructure with UDI at a level of CHF 6.2 million. Ms Rantakari urged Central Committee members to encourage their churches to fulfil their financial commitments.

Reference was made to the fact that more than half the members of Central Committee receive a 100% subsidy to enable them to attend meetings. The Finance Committee had asked staff to present guidelines for a range of subsidies, from partial to full, for consideration by the Executive Committee in February. If approved, this plan would be introduced for Central Committee in 1997.

New ways of fund-raising and new sources of income must continue to be sought, and staff were intensifying their efforts to generate income. Fund

balances must be replenished, and expenses must be kept within the level of anticipated income.

Dr Kässmann referred to the WCC's language policy which had from the beginning enabled many people to participate in meetings who could not have done so without the assistance of interpretation and translation. She expressed particular concern at the proposed reductions in the Language Service and in the Office of Communication as a whole: surely this was an area where the WCC should maintain and increase its links with the member churches rather than reduce them.

Ms Rantakari said the Finance Committee was aware of the important role that Communication had to play; a reduction in costs was being proposed in areas which it was felt could be more self-financing than at present, such as Publications.

The General Secretary added that there was no intention to change the Council's language policy; interpretation and translation of documents requiring action would continue to be provided for official meetings. Some background material for this meeting had been translated at the cost of the Unit concerned rather than on the Central Committee budget. However, the official languages are of European origin and many member churches are not served by our policy.

The General Secretary reiterated his conviction that the area of Communication was one in which WCC must be prepared to invest, since communication is an indispensable part of relationships with and between member churches. It may be necessary to re-think the instrumentalities used - many new forms of communication continue to emerge which have not yet been appropriated into our style of communication, and these have to be kept in mind as work in the area of communication and relationships is reviewed.

- i. *The Central Committee approved the revised Budget for 1997, instructed the staff to implement the changes recommended by the Finance Committee and asked member churches and funding partners to contribute as a matter of urgency to the Staff Separation Fund in order to eliminate the remaining deficit of CHF 235,000.*

15. Investment Policy Guidelines

New investment policy guidelines had been drawn up taking into account ethical considerations and some technical, financial ones. The more

technical guidelines had been approved by the Investment Advisory Group and the Finance Sub-committee of the Executive Committee. The "General Guidelines" had been revised, taking into account the Council's ethical stance, and were submitted for approval.

Mr Rob van Drimmelen explained that, in the course of drawing up guidelines for the General and Endowment Funds, it had been considered useful to revise the language of the General Guidelines. The terminology was therefore more sophisticated while staying within the spirit of the earlier text. The Guidelines also provided more detail in relation to areas of investment to be avoided.

With regard to the point stating: "The WCC shall not invest in enterprises which derive more than 10% of their annual turnover from the following activities:

- nuclear weapons research and development, production and supply of key components for nuclear warheads, and/or the operation of nuclear power plants;
- research and development, production and supply of biological and chemical weapons;
- research and development, production and supply of armaments;
- production of liquor or tobacco;
- gambling"

Dr Miller moved that the figure of 10% be amended to read "5%".

Bishop Rogerson questioned the wisdom of making a decision at this time without having some clarity about what the implications were in terms of our investments: would it be necessary to disinvest and, if so, to what extent?

Several members were in favour of the amendment, but Mr Allsop suggested that some leeway should be allowed to the Investment Advisory Group in view of the realities of the market. Banks do sometimes take over stock on a short-term basis only to disinvest shortly afterwards; would this imply that the Council would have to withdraw its investments entirely even for a short-term stock market move? He felt it would be wiser not to act hastily on this issue.

Ms Rantakari suggested that this point be referred to the Finance Committee for further work and that it be brought back to Central Committee in 1997, but requested Central Committee to ratify the rest of the guidelines.

- j. *The Central Committee agreed to ratify the new General Investment Policy Guidelines, with the exception of point 1. under Policy (on which action was postponed until 1997), for the*

Endowment Fund and the General and other funds, as set out in Appendix VII.

Ms Rantakari concluded her report by expressing thanks to the members of the Finance Committee and staff for their work.

The Central Committee received the report of the Finance Committee with appreciation.

STAFFING REPORT

In a closed session, with 114 voting members plus 3 Officers present, the Moderator invited Dr Nababan, as moderator of the Staffing and Nominations Committee, to present the Staffing Report.

I. STAFFING

The Central Committee authorised the General Secretary to proceed with the following appointments and contract extensions, the legal obligations of the World Council of Churches to be binding only as from the actual signing by both parties of the corresponding contracts. (Text approved by Central Committee, Geneva, January 1987.)

A. APPOINTMENTS

Unit III

- Rev. Freddy Knutsen (Norway, Church of Norway) as Executive Secretary for Youth for four years from an agreed date

B. CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

All the contract extensions listed below are for one year:

Unit I

- Ms Evelyn Appiah (Ghana, Methodist Church) Executive Secretary, Lay Participation towards Inclusive Community, from 1 February 1998 (will complete 28 years 6 months' service)
- Rev. Dr Dagmar Heller (FRG, EKD [United]) Executive Secretary, from 1 October 1997 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service)

Unit II

- Dr Rexford Asante (Ghana, Presbyterian Church of Ghana) Executive Secretary, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- Dr Daleep Mukarji (India, Church of North India) Executive Secretary for Urban Rural Mission, from 1 April 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

Unit IV

- Ms Carol Abel (UK, Church of Ireland [Anglican]) Coordinator, Information Management Systems Development, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)

*General Secretariat**Communication Department - Ecumenical News International*

- Mr Stephen Brown (UK, United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom) Editor, Ecumenical Press (News) Service, from 1 March 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- Mr Edmund Doogue (Ireland, Church of England (Anglican)) Editor, Ecumenical Press (News) Service, from 1 January 1998 (will complete 5 years' service)
- *Office of Management and Finance - OICD*
 - Mr Peter Tallon (UK, Roman Catholic Church) Proposals and Reports Coordinator, from 1 November 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)
- *Computer Information Services - CIS*
 - Mr David Pozzi-Johnson (USA, Evangelical Covenant Church in America) Director, from 1 October 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

III. RATIFICATION

At the request of the Executive Committee, the Central Committee **approved** the following contract extensions for one year, as agreed by the Officers in May 1996:

Unit II

- Rev. Ana Langerak (USA, Lutheran Church in Costa Rica) Director, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

Unit III

- Rev. Samuel **Kobia** (Kenya, Methodist Church in Kenya) Executive Director, from 1 September 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

Unit IV

- Rev. Myra **Blyth** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) Executive Director, from 1 June 1997 (will complete 10 years 3 months' service)

IV. VACANCY

General Secretariat

- Executive Director for Finance and Administration

[The decision to declare this vacancy was made at a later point and is reported under the Report of the General Secretariat Committee (see p.)].

The Executive Committee authorised the Officers to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

At the request of the Executive Committee, the Central Committee authorised the Executive Committee to fill urgent vacancies that must be filled prior to the next meeting of Central Committee.

V. INFORMATION

1. Appointments by the Officers

- a) It was reported that the Officers made the following appointments by postal vote:

Unit IV

- Mr Nils **Carstensen** (Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark) as Executive Secretary, Emergencies Information Co-ordination and Media (ACT Team), for two years from 1 October 1996
- Ms Miriam **Lutz** (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) as Executive Secretary for Emergency and Rehabilitation (ACT Team Leader) for three years from 1 January 1996.

b) It was reported that the Officers made the following appointments at their meeting in Geneva in May 1996:

Unit IV

- Mr Alexander **Belopopsky** (UK, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) at present Consultant for Europe, as Executive Secretary for Europe for one year from 1 February 1997.

General Secretariat: Office of Finance and Management - OICD

- Ms Anu **Talvivaara** (Finland, Orthodox Church of Finland [Eastern]) at present Executive Secretary for Youth, Unit III, as Deputy Director from 22 July 1996 until 31 December 1998.

2. Contract Extensions

It was reported that the Officers at their meeting in Geneva in May 1996 extended the following contracts, all for one year:

Unit I

- Dr Judo **Poerwowidagdo** (Indonesia, Javanese Christian Churches in Central Java) Executive Secretary, from 1 September 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

Unit II

- Rev. Samuel **Ada** (Togo, Evangelical Church in Togo) Executive Secretary, from 1 September 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)
- Ms Teny **Pirri-Simonian** (Lebanon, Armenian Apostolic Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Christian Education, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 11 years 6 months' service)
- Ms Diana **Smith** (UK, Church of England [Anglican]) Executive Secretary for Health and Learning Materials, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

Unit III

- Rev. Dwain **Epps** (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) Executive Secretary, Public Issues/International Affairs, from 1 August 1997 (will complete 6 years 7 months' service)
- Ms Thembisile **Majola** (South Africa, Church of the Province of Southern Africa [Anglican]), Executive Secretary for Women and Development, from 1 August 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)
- Mr Michel **Monjol** (France, Roman Catholic Church) Finance Officer, from 1 April 1997 (will complete 19 years 9 months' service)

Unit IV

- Mr Francis Muhungi **Kanyoro** (Kenya, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania), Director, ECLOF, from 1 April 1997 (will complete 9 years 2 months' service)
- Dr Helene **Moussa** (Canada, Coptic Orthodox Church [Oriental]) Executive Secretary for Uprooted People, from 1 June 1997 (will complete 4 years' service)
- Dr Kyung Seo **Park** (Korea Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea [PROK]) Executive Secretary for Asia, from 1 April 1997 (will complete 15 years' service)
- Mr Patrick **Taran** (USA, Society of Friends General Conference) Executive Secretary for Migration, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

General Secretariat - Office of the General Secretary

- Ms Jeanne **Becher** (USA, Episcopal Church [Anglican]) Assistant to the General Secretary, from 1 April 1997 (will complete 18 years 5 months' service)

- Communication Department

- Mr Jan **Kok** (Netherlands, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) Director, from 1 May 1997 (will complete 25 years' service)
- Rev. John **Newbury** (UK, Methodist Church) Press and Information Officer, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 5 years' service)

- Office for Income Coordination and Development

- Mr Günter **Rath** (Federal Republic of Germany, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria [EKD]) Director, from 1 June 1997 (will complete 8 years' service)

- Personnel Office

- Rev. Carlos **Sintado** (Argentina, Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina) Director, from 1 July 1997 (will complete 17 years 6 months' service)

3. Vacancy

It was reported that the Officers declared the following vacancy:

General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- Director

4. Arrivals

It was reported that the following staff members would take up, or had taken up, their appointments on the dates indicated:

Unit II

- Mr Simon **Oxley** (UK, Baptist Union of Great Britain) Executive Secretary for Education, on 1 May 1996.

Unit IV

- Mr Nils **Carstensen** (Denmark, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark) as Executive Secretary, Emergencies Information Co-ordination and Media (ACT Team), on 1 October 1996.
- Ms Miriam **Lutz** (USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) Executive Secretary for Emergency and Rehabilitation (ACT Team Leader) on 1 January 1996.

General Secretariat - Eighth Assembly Office

- Ms Pauline **McKay** (New Zealand, Methodist Church), Executive Secretary, on 1 November 1995.

5. Departures

It was reported that the following staff members would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the dates indicated:

Unit II

- Ms Margareta **Sköld** (Sweden, Church of Sweden) Executive Secretary, Health, on 31 December 1996 (will complete 7 years 2 months' service)

Unit III

- Mr Peter **Brock** (Australia, Anglican Church of Australia) Executive Secretary, Youth, on 31 August 1996 (completed 7 years' service)

Unit IV

- Ms Brenda **Fitzpatrick** (Australia, Uniting Church in Australia) Executive Secretary for Communication, on 31 May 1996 (completed 7 years 5 months' service)

- Mr Samuel Isaac (India, Church of South India) Executive Secretary/ Deputy Director, on 31 December 1996 (will complete 16 years' service)
- Dr Hugh McCullum (Canada, United Church of Canada) Information Coordinator, Emergencies and Rehabilitation, on 30 June 1996 (completed 1 year's service)

General Secretariat - Ecumenical Institute, Bossey

- Fr Francis Frost (UK, Roman Catholic Church) Professor of Theology, on 30 April 1996 (completed 6 years 6 months' service)
- Dr Jacques Nicole (Switzerland, Swiss Protestant Church Federation) Director, on 30 June 1997 (will complete 7 years' service)

- Department of Communication

- Mr Mark Halton (USA, Presbyterian Church [USA]) Magazine Editor, on 30 September 1995 (completed 1 year 8 months' service)

- Finance

- Rev. Hugh Pettingell (UK, Church of England [Anglican]) Director, on 30 November 1996 (will complete 16 years 10 months' service)

6. Consultants

a) It was reported that the following consultants were appointed by the General Secretary since the last Executive Committee meeting in September 1995:

Unit II

- Dr Eva Ombaka (Tanzania, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania) Technical Adviser on Pharmaceuticals, for 18 months from 1 January 1996 (will complete 5 years 6 months' service)

Unit III

- Ms Geneviève Jacques (France, Reformed Church of France) Consultant on Human Rights, CCIA, for one year from 1 April 1996 (will complete 1 year's service)
- Ms Donnalie Edwards (Antigua and Barbuda, Church of the Province of the West Indies [Anglican]) Consultant on Youth, for one year from 1 February 1996 (will complete 3 years' service)

- Rev. Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga (Angola, Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola) for one year from 1 January 1996 (will complete 4 years' service)

Unit IV

- Mr Alexander **Belopopsky** (UK, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople [Eastern]) Consultant for Europe, for one year from 1 February 1996 (will complete 1 year's service)
- Mr Joel **McClellan** (USA, Society of Friends [Quakers]) Consultant for Networking and Advocacy, for 1 year from 1 February 1996 (will complete 3 years' service)
- Mr George **Petty** (USA, Lutheran Church in America) Consultant for ECLOF, for one year from 16 September 1996.
- Mr Douglas **Smith** (USA, Disciples of Christ) Information and Systems Consultant, for one year from 1 September 1996.

General Secretariat - Computer Information Services

- Mr Robert **Varga** (Switzerland, Roman Catholic Church) for one year from 1 January 1996 (will complete 13 years' service)

b) It was reported that the following consultants would leave the service of the World Council of Churches on the date indicated:

Unit I

- Ms Ye Ja **Lee** (Korea, Presbyterian Church of Korea) Consultant for Differently Abled Persons, on 31 July 1996 (completed 2 years 3 months' service)

Unit III

- Rev. Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga (Angola, Evangelical Baptist Church in Angola) on 31 December 1996 (will complete 4 years' service)

II. RE-ELECTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

In a closed session on Wednesday 18 September 1998, it was reported that Dr Konrad Raiser would conclude his first term of service as General Secretary on 31 December 1997.

The Procedures to Elect a General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, agreed by the Central Committee in January 1987, read as follows:

"1. Re-election or renewal of contract:

"A. In the case of an incumbent general secretary, the Moderator and the Vice Moderators of Central Committee should bring a recommendation to the Executive Committee in closed session 12-18 months before the end of the term of the appointment. The Executive Committee shall report its recommendation to the Central Committee in closed session.

"B. If a recommendation to re-elect is presented, the voting procedures agreed upon for the election of a general secretary shall apply."

Following these procedures, the Moderator and the Vice Moderators, after evaluating the work of the General Secretary based upon the job description, and after having received the assessment of senior staff, recommended to the Executive Committee the re-election of the incumbent General Secretary.

The Executive Committee at its meeting on 11 September 1996 also made an evaluation of the work of the General Secretary, and agreed unanimously to recommend to the Central Committee that

Dr Konrad Raiser be re-elected to a second term of office from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2002.

In a written ballot, the Central Committee voted in favour of this recommendation.

The Moderator announced the General Secretary's reappointment at the beginning of an open session on 19 September: that Dr Konrad Raiser had been re-elected for a second term of service - from January 1998 to December 2002. He assured Dr Raiser of Central Committee's support as he carried on his responsibility as General Secretary at this crucial juncture of the history of the ecumenical movement in general and of the WCC in particular.

Responding, Dr Raiser expressed gratitude to members of Central Committee for this sign of their confidence. He thanked the Officers for the way in which they had prepared for this decision, and for the good advice given to him for his second period of service.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

1997	Executive Committee	Cyprus	12-15 February
	Executive Committee	Geneva	9-10 September
	Central Committee	Geneva	11-19 September (arr. 10th, dep. 20th)
1998	Executive Committee	Geneva	17-20 February

CLOSING ACTIONS

In assessing the work done by Central Committee at this session, the Moderator noted three achievements:

- the Committee had carried out a comprehensive and critical assessment of the Council's work over the past year;
- it had spelled out the emerging concerns and priorities of the Council for the coming years;
- it had identified the general future direction to be taken.

The coming year would be a critical one, since it would be necessary to identify programme priorities as well as to review the present managerial aspects of the Council. The contributions and the prayers of the member churches would be crucial for the life and witness of the WCC.

The Moderator expressed thanks to the Officers for their support; to members of Central Committee for their participation in the deliberations and actions taken; to advisers, observers and other participants who had helped carry forward the work that was before Central Committee; to those who acted as moderators of deliberative sessions; to the co-moderators of the General Secretariat Committee and the Unit Committees; to the General Secretary and his colleagues in the General Secretariat who helped to ensure the smooth running of the meeting.

The Moderator thanked those staff who had left or who would be leaving the Council in the coming months for their devoted and committed service.

The General Secretary thanked all those who contributed to the success of the meeting, including:

- Mary Ann Lundy, Terry MacArthur and Luzmarina Campos Garcia for planning the Worship

- Nan Braunschweiger: Conference Secretary
- Renate Sbeghen for organising the parish visits on 15 September
- The team of stewards under the staff leadership of Donna McNeil and Garland Pierce
- The interpreters and translators, coordinated by Joan Reilly and Ada Silenzi
- Andrée and Lino d'Alessandri and Robert Equey for the interpretation equipment
- Christina Murillo-Bianchi and Yvette Milosovic, responsible for the Documents Office
- The Typing Pool, under the leadership of Judith Kocher
- Administrative staff in the General Secretariat: Brigitte Constant, Gudrun Smith and Ursula Zierl
- Minute writer Rosemary Green, assisted by Jeanne Becher, Béatrice Bengtsson, Eldri Jauch, Yvette Milosevic, and Margot Wahl
- Eldri Jauch and the team who staffed the registration and information desks
- The staff of the telephone/telex/telefax office under the leadership of Marie-Christine Gendre
- Yasmina Lebouachera and the cash office staff
- Libby Visinand and Peter Tallon, editors of *Day by Day*
- Heather Stunt and the staff of the WCC bookshop
- Peter Williams, photographer, and Gaby Vuagniaux, responsible for photo distribution
- Bob Scott, plenary hall manager
- David Pozzi-Johnson and Catherine Inoubli for computer services
- Gilbert Cudré-Mauroux for recordings
- Margot Wahl and Malle Niilus: coordination with the cafeteria
- M. Eberl and his kitchen staff
- Pauline McKay and the staff group responsible for preparations for the social evening
- Technical staff coordinated by José Mendez
- The Raptim staff for travel arrangements

On behalf of participants, Bishop Krusche thanked the Moderators and the Vice-Moderators for their guidance throughout the meeting.

The Moderator adjourned the forty-seventh meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches at 12h.30 on Friday 20 September 1996.

*

CLOSING WORSHIP took place in the Chapel of the Ecumenical Centre. Bishop Zacharias preached the sermon.

PARTICIPANTS

PRESIDIUM

Presidents

Prof. Anna Marie Aagaard, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
 Bishop Vinton Anderson, African Methodist Episcopal Church, USA
 Bishop Leslie Boseto, United Church in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands

Mrs Priyanka Mendis, Church of Ceylon, Sri Lanka

Rev. Eunice Santana, Disciples of Christ, Puerto Rico

His Holiness Pope Shenouda, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt

Dr Aaron Tolen, Presbyterian Church of Cameroon

OFFICERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Moderator

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, Armenian Apostolic Church
 (Cilicia), Lebanon

Vice-Moderators

Ephorus Dr Soritua A. E. Nababan, Batak Protestant Christian Church,
 Indonesia

Pastora Néilda Ritchie, Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina

General Secretary

Rev. Dr Konrad Raiser, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany

MEMBERS OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Mrs Ruth Abraham, Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus

Ms Ahn Ju Hye, Korean Methodist Church

Rev. Ian Allsop, Churches of Christ in Australia

Dr Mihály Almási, Baptist Union of Hungary

Bishop Ambrosius of Joensuu, Orthodox Church of Finland

Metropolitan Athanasios (Papas) of Heliopolis and Theira, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Metropolitan Elias Audi, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

Bishop Paulo Ayres Mattos, Methodist Church in Brazil

Mrs Khushnud Azariah, Church of Pakistan

Mrs Kathryn Bannister, United Methodist Church, USA

Barbara Bazett, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Dr Marion Best, United Church of Canada

Prof. Dr André Birmelé, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession of Alsace and Lorraine, France

Rev. Dr Karel Blei, Netherlands Reformed Church

Sra Cristina Bösenberg, Evangelical Church of the River Plate, Argentina

Archbishop Nerses Bozabalian, Armenian Apostolic Church (Etchmiadzin)

Rev. Violet Sampa Bredt, United Church of Zambia

Mr John Briggs, Baptist Union of Great Britain

Most Rev. Edmond Browning, Episcopal Church USA

Rt Rev. Björn Bue, Church of Norway

Mr Ari Carvalho, United Methodist Church, USA

Father Vsevolod Chaplin, Russian Orthodox Church

Metropolitan Chrysanthos of Limassol, Church of Cyprus

Rev. Dr Paul A. Crow, Jr., Disciples of Christ, USA

Mr Andrew Mbugo Elisa, Episcopal Church of the Sudan

Pastor Erasmo Farfan Figueroa, Pentecostal Mission Church, Chile

Rev. Wali Fejo, Uniting Church of Australia

Rev. Duleep Fernando, Methodist Church Sri Lanka

Rev. Julio Francisco, Evangelical Congregational Church in Angola

Mrs Olga Ganaba, Russian Orthodox Church

Dr Maxine Garrett, Moravian Church (Northern Province), USA

Mrs Virginia Gcabashe, Methodist Church of Southern Africa

Prof. Dr Milan Gerka, Orthodox Church of Slovakia, Slovak Republic

Bishop Hans Gerny, Old Catholic Church of Switzerland

Ms Silva Ghazelyan, Armenian Apostolic Church (Etchmiadzin)

Rt Rev. Dr John Ghose, Church of North India

Rt Rev. Drexel Gomez, Church of the Province of the West Indies (Anglican), Bahamas

Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson, Reformed Church in America

Mrs Makiko Hirata, United Church of Christ in Japan

Mr Béalo Houmbouy, Evangelical Church in New Caledonia and Loyalty Is.

Metropolitan Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

Mrs Maryon Jägers, Church of England, (Netherlands)
 Mrs Rosangela Jarjour, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon
 Archimandrite Nestor Jiliaev, Russian Orthodox Church
 Dr Mac Charles Jones, National Baptist Convention of America, USA
 Rt Rev. Jonas Jonson, Church of Sweden
 Rev. Dr Margot Kässmann, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Citoyen Tusange Katonia, Church of Christ in Zaire - Episcopal Baptist
 Community
 Ms Ülle Keel, Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
 Rev. Edea Kidu, United Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands
 Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, Russian Orthodox Church
 Mr Dimitre Kirov, Bulgarian Orthodox Church
 Very Rev. Leonid Kishkovsky, Orthodox Church in America
 Ms Wsiewolod Konach, Autocephalic Orthodox Church in Poland
 Prof. George Koshy, Church of South India
 Dr Günter Krusche, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Dr Birgitta Larsson, Church of Sweden
 Bishop Lavrentije of Sabac-Valjevo, Serbian Orthodox Church
 Dr Peter Lodberg, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark
 Dr Janice Love, United Methodist Church, USA
 Ms Kathy Magnus, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Rev. Dr David Mandeng Ma Mbeleg, Presbyterian Church of Cameroon
 Mrs Nadeje Mandysova, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, Czech Rep.
 Ms Maryssa Mapanao-Camaddo, United Church of Christ in the Philippines
 Rev. Hector Mendez, Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba
 Rev. Dr Donald Miller, Church of the Brethren, USA
 Rev. Dr A. Matitsoane Moseme, Lesotho Evangelical Church
 Dr med. Irmela Müller-Stöver, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Rt Rev. John Mungania, Methodist Church in Kenya
 Mrs Faith Mwondha, Church of Uganda
 Rt Rev. John Neill, Church of Ireland
 Ms Margarita Neliubova, Russian Orthodox Church
 Bishop Nifon of Slobozia & Calarasi, Romanian Orthodox Church
 Mrs Prakai Nontawasee, Church of Christ in Thailand
 Ms Beatrice Odonkor, Presbyterian Church of Ghana
 Frau Christine Oettel, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Rt Rev. Dr Henry Okullu, Church of the Province of Kenya (Anglican)
 Bishop Amos Omodunbi, Methodist Church, Nigeria
 Very Rev. Prof. Joseph Omoyajowo, Church of the Province of Nigeria
 Rev. Dr Ruth Page, Church of Scotland

Rev. Valamotu Palu, Methodist Church in Tonga
 Dr Park Jong-Wha, Presbyterian Church in the Rep. of Korea
 Most Rev. Tito Pasco, Philippine Independent Church
 Rev. Caroline Pattiasina-Toreh, Protestant Church in the Moluccas, Indonesia
 Rev. Rachel Paulin, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa/New Zealand
 Most Rev. Michael Peers, Anglican Church of Canada
 Archpriest Viktor Petliuchenko, Russian Orthodox Church
 Dr Elsie Philip, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, India
 Pasteur Jean Baptiste Rakotomaro, Eglise luthérienne malgache
 Ms V. R. Vidhya Rani, United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India
 Mrs Birgitta Rantakari, Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland
 Landesbischof Eberhardt Renz, EKD - Evangelical Church in Germany
 Rt Rev. Barry Rogerson, Church of England, UK
 Prof. John Romanides, Church of Greece
 Dr Heinz Rüegger, Swiss Protestant Church Federation
 Rev. Dr William Rusch, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 Pastor José da Silveira Salvador, Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
 Pastor Carlos Sanchez, Baptist Association of El Salvador
 Mrs Patricia Scoutas, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Australia
 Dr Nenevi Seddoh, Evangelical Church of Togo
 Bishop Serapion, Coptic Orthodox Church, Egypt
 Rev. Dr Paul Sherry, United Church of Christ, USA
 Mrs Sri Winarti Soedjatmoko, East Java Christian Church, Indonesia
 Dr Bert Supit, Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa, Indonesia
 Bishop Jan Szarek, Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
 Bishop Melvin Talbert, United Methodist Church, USA
 Ms Kristine Thompson, Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Archbishop Timotheos, Ethiopian Orthodox Church
 Very Rev. Dr Georges Tsetsis, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople,
 Switzerland
 Rev. Dr Eugene Turner, Presbyterian Church (USA)
 Dr Anne Tveter, Church of Norway
 Pasteur Daniel Vanescote, United Protestant Church of Belgium
 Rev. Angelique Walker-Smith, National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.
 Rev. Dr Daniel Weiss, American Baptist Churches, USA
 Rev. Elizabeth Welch, United Reformed Church in the UK
 Rev. Martin Wessels, Moravian Church in Southern Africa
 Drs Aukje Westra, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
 Mrs Tungane Williams, Cook Islands Christian Church

Rt Rev. Dr Zacharias Mar Theophilos, Mar Thoma Syrian Church of
Malabar, India

Rev. Maran Zau Yaw, Myanmar Baptist Convention (Burma)

Pasteur Amos Zita, Presbyterian Church of Mozambique

SUBSTITUTES

Prof. Ion Bria
Romanian Orthodox Church

for Metr. Daniel of Moldavia and
Bukovina

Dr Dizideriu Bustya
Reformed Church of Romania

for Bishop Dr Kálmán Csiha

Rev. David Gill
Uniting Church in Australia

for Ms Jan Malpas
Anglican Church of Australia

Ato Wossen Seged Gebre Amlak
Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church

for Ato G. Yayneshate G/Selassie

Mr Gabriel Habib
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch

for Dr Charles Ajalat
15-20 September

Bishop Rolf Koppe
Evangelical Church in Germany

for Prof. Dr Klaus Engelhardt

OKR Tim Kuschnerus
Evangelical Church in Germany

for Frau Edeltraud Engel

Dr Gyula Nagy
Lutheran Church in Hungary

for Rev. Marianne Szabo-Matrai

Rev. John Reardon
United Reformed Church in the UK

for Ms Rosey Davies-Izard
Methodist Church, UK

Rev. Dr Bruce Robbins
United Methodist Church, USA

for Mr Ari Carvalho
18-20 September

Rev. Kuatemanie Ulutui
Congregational Christian Church in Samoa

for Rev. Nove Vailaau

Mr Stig Utne
Church of Norway

for Dr Anne Tveter
18-20 September

DELEGATED REPRESENTATIVES OF MEMBER CHURCHES NOT OTHERWISE REPRESENTED

Rev. Krister Andersson
Mr Abalo Apedo-Amah

Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
Methodist Church in Togo

DELEGATED OBSERVERS

Msgr John A. Radano

Roman Catholic Church
(Pontifical Council for
Promoting Christian Unity)

Msgr John Mutiso Mbinda

Roman Catholic Church
(Pontifical Council for
Promoting Christian Unity)

GUEST

Rev. Dr Emilio Castro

Evangelical Methodist Church, Uruguay

ADVISERS FROM WORLD ORGANISATIONS AND OTHER BODIES

Rev. Morten Monrad Aagaard
Rev. Dr Donald Anderson
Ms Clarissa Balan-Sycip
Dr Bert Beach

United Bible Societies
Anglican Consultative Council
World Student Christian Federation
Seventh-Day Adventist General
Conference

Ms Claudia Beppler
Ms Elaine Hesse-Steel
Lieut.Colonel John Major
Mr Vladimir Misijuk
Rev. John C. Moyer

International Christian Youth Exchange
World YWCA
Salvation Army
SYNDESMOS
Frontier Internship in Mission

Dr Ishmael Noko	Lutheran World Federation
Rev. Dr Milan Opocensky	World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)
Dr Albert Pennybacker	Ecumenical Development Initiative
Mr G.H.O. van Maanen	Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS)
Ms Adrienne van Melle-Hermans	Christian Peace Conference
Deaconess Louise Williams	DIAKONIA
Dr Dorothea Woods	Friends World Committee for Consultation
Mr Ralph Young	World Methodist Council

ADVISERS FROM NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCILS AND REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Drs Ineke Bakker	Council of Churches in the Netherlands
Ms Brigalia Bam	South African Council of Churches (SACC)
Mrs Gunnel Borgegaard	Nordic Ecumenical Council
Rev. Rainer Burkhart	Council of Christian Churches in Germany
Rev. Dr Joan B. Campbell	National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCCCUSA)
Dr Feliciano Carino	Christian Conference of Asia
Rev. Augusto Chipesse	Council of Christian Churches in Angola
Rev. David Asante Dartey	Christian Council of Ghana
Rev. Noel Davies	CYTUN: Churches Together in Wales
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Mr Jean Fischer	Conference of European Churches
Rev. David Gill	National Council of Churches in Australia
Rev. Dr Riad Jarjour	Middle East Council of Churches
Rev. Dr Ipe Joseph	National Council of Churches in India
Rev. Murombedzi Kuchera	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
Pastor Holger Lam	Ecumenical Council of Denmark
Rev. Robert Mills	Canadian Council of Churches
Rev. Angetile Musomba	Christian Council of Tanzania
Rev. Canon James Ndyabahika	Uganda Joint Christian Council

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 Rev. Josoa Rakotonirainy

 Rev. John Reardon

 Bishop Samuel San Si Htay
 Ms Eunice Sowazi
 Rev. Enock Tombe Stephen
 Rt Rev. Roman Tiples

 Rev. Dr Monrelle Williams

Christian Council of Sweden
 Communion of Churches in Indonesia
 National Christian Council of Sri Lanka
 Christian Council of Churches in
 Madagascar
 Council of Churches for Britain and
 Ireland (CCBI)
 Myanmar Council of Churches
 Council of Swaziland Churches
 Sudan Council of Churches
 National Council of Churches,
 Philippines
 Carribean Conference of Churches

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Mr Roel Aalbergsberg - Unit IV
 Very Rev. N. Apostola - Unit I
 Mr Trond Bakkevig - Unit III
 Dr Christoph Benn - Unit II
 Ms Giselle Berger Griot - Youth
 Mr Vince Cross - Unit IV
 Ms Shirley DeWolf - Unit IV
 Mr Mandla-Akhe Dube - Youth
 Ms Salamo Fulivai - Unit IV
 Rev. Gordon Gray - Unit I
 Prof. John de Gruchy - Unit III
 Ms Noha Ibrahim - Youth

Prof. T. Jacob John - Unit II
 Craig Kielburger - Unit IV
 Ms Jane Lowicki - Unit IV
 Dr Sigrun Mogedal - Unit II
 Mr Simon Moglia - Youth
 Mr Cees Oskam - Unit IV
 Ms Setaita Tamanikaiyaroi - Youth
 Dr Mary Tanner - Unit I
 Rev. Dr Michael Taylor - Unit IV
 Ashtha Tuladhar - Unit IV
 Mr Kenneth Whyte - Youth
 Dr Dolores Williams - Unit III

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 Mr John Casey
 Rev. E. Chomoturi
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 Rev. Ane Hjerrild

Protestant Methodist Church, Ivory
 Coast
 Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
 World Alliance of YMCAs
 Zimbabwe Council of Churches
 Church of Sweden
 Church of Denmark

Rev. Jean-Pierre Jornod
 Rev. Bartevo Julumian
 Rev. Anna Ljung
 Rev. Joan Parrott
 Rev. David Perry
 Rev. Dr Bruce Robbins
 Rev. Heinrich Rusterholz
 Ms Rosemary Siyachitema
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Jubilee Committee, Bossey
 Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia)
 Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
 American Baptist Churches in the USA
 Episcopal Church, USA
 United Methodist Church, USA
 Swiss Protestant Church Federation
 WCC Eighth Assembly Office, Harare
 Church of Norway

COOPTED STAFF

Mrs Andrée d'Alessandri
 Mr Lino d'Alessandri
 Mr Antonio Alvarez Gazapo
 Mrs Hilde Benz-Werner
 Rev. Heinz Birchmeier
 Dr Alain Blancy
 Rev. Tony Coates
 Ms Christiane Demont
 Mr Robert Equey
 Ms Tomoko Evdokimoff-Faerber
 Mr Robert Faerber
 Ms Emmy Flegenheimer
 Ms Mabel Garzon
 Ms Roswitha Ginglas-Poulet
 Ms Elisabeth Jaquemot
 Ms Cornelia Kerkhoff
 Ms Nelly Lasserre

Ms Silvia Lee-Rieben
 Ms Françoise Nagy
 Ms Zinaida Nossova
 Ms Tatiana Orlova
 Ms Margaret Pater
 Mrs Olga Piskounova
 Dr Elisabeth Raiser
 Ms Antoinette Richard
 Ms Madeleine Richter
 Mr Aharon Sapsezian
 Ms Renate Strecker
 Ms Evelyne Tatu
 Ms Natalia Tchernykh
 Ms Ludmila Tkachuk
 Ms Pilar Tosat-Delaraye
 Dr Marguerite Wieser

STAFF

Ms Carol Abel
 Dr Samuel Ada
 Ms Catherine Alt
 Ms Dorris Appel
 Ms Evelyn Appiah
 Rev. Dr Wesley Ariarajah

Mr Kofi Asante
 Ms Margarita Banda
 Ms Salome Barth-Dadie
 Ms Jeanne Becher
 Mr Pierre Beffa
 Mr Alexander Belopopsky

Ms Beatrice Bengtsson
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 Ms Peter Bouteneff
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 Mr Stephen Brown
 Ms Patricia Brüscheweiler
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 Ms Danielle Chaperon
 Ms Veena Chervet
 Ms Michele Clibbon
 Ms Brigitte Constant
 Sr Monica Cooney
 Ms Maryse Courvoisier
 Mr Gilbert Cudré-Mauroux
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 Ms Rosemarie Dönch
 Mr Edmund Doogue
 Rev. John Doom
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 Rev. Dr Christopher Duraisingh
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 Ms Simone Ergas
 Ms Salpy Eskidjian
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 Ms Shirley Golding
 Ms Wendy Goldsworthy
 Ms Rosemary Green
 Ms Pamela Greet

Ms Monika Grob
 Ms Diwata Hunziker
 Ms Lore Hyatt
 Ms Catherine Inoubli
 Mr Samuel Isaac
 Ms Eldri Jauch
 Mr Philip Jenks
 Mr Clement John
 Mr Muhungi Kanyoro
 Mr Melaku Kifle
 Rev. Samuel Kobia
 Ms Judith Kocher
 Mr Jan Kok
 Ms Livia Konta de Palma
 Rev. Ana Langerak
 Ms Yasmina Lebouachera
 Mr Yorgo Lemopoulos
 Ms Mary Ann Lundy
 Ms Miriam Lutz
 Rev. Terry MacArthur
 Ms Lise Marquot
 Ms Uta Matthey
 Mr Joel McClellan
 Ms Caroline McComish
 Ms Pauline McKay
 Ms Joyce McNulty
 Mr John McVie
 Mr José Mendez
 Ms Sheila Mesa
 Ms Rebecca Metaxa
 Ms Yvette Milosevic
 Dr Tarek Mitri
 Mr Michel Monjol
 Ms Salwa Morcos
 Mr Daleep Mukarji
 Ms Cristina Murillo-Bianchi
 Mr Costandi Mustaklem
 Rev. John Newbury
 Ms Malle Niilus
 Ms Caroline Northcott

Rev. Simon Oxley
 Ms Marta Palma
 Ms Claudie Perez
 Mr François Pernet
 Rev. Garland Pierce
 Ms Teny Pirri-Simonian
 Dr John Pobee
 Mr Judo Poerwowidagdo
 Mr David Pozzi-Johnson
 Mr Günter Rath
 Ms Emilia Reichmuth
 Ms Miriam Reidy
 Ms Joan Reilly
 Ms Mercedes Restrepo-Herzig
 Dr Martin Robra
 Ms Helga Rollman
 Ms Regina Rueger-Surur
 Mr Gert Rüppell
 Rev. Ioan Sauca
 Ms Renate Sbeghen
 Rev. Robert Scott
 Ms Erlinda Senturias
 Ms Ada Silenzi

Rev. Carlos Sintado
 Ms Diana Smith
 Mr Douglas Smith
 Ms Gudrun Smith
 Ms Jean Stromberg
 Ms Heather Stunt
 Mr Peter Tallon
 Ms Anu Talvivaara
 Mr Patrick Taran
 Mr Janet Thomas
 Ms Claire Tierney
 Mr Hans Ucko
 Mr Huibert van Beek
 Mr Marlin VanElderen
 Ms Charlotte Vanel
 Ms Elisabeth Visinand
 Ms Denise von Arx
 Ms Gabrielle Vuagniaux
 Ms Margot Wahl
 Ms Luzia Wehrle
 Mr Peter Williams
 Ms Gao Ying
 Ms Ursula Zierl

STEWARDS

Ms Ghada Abou Mrad
 Mr Sohail Akhtar
 Mr Johny George
 Mr Slavomir Batka
 Mr Derrick Beeldsnijder
 Ms Jenny Bent McDonald
 Ms Jane Capstick
 Ms Morna Stella Christmas
 Ms Timur Citra Sari
 Ms Cynthia Cushman
 Ms Leah Ellison
 Ms Milja Guttorm
 Mr Charley Hanania

Mr Piotr Krupicz
 Ms Sara Lee
 Mr Nyalalani Mange-Ndebele
 Ms Rana Nakhal
 Ms Ghislaine Nkouka-Moukembu
 Ms Cheryl Ann Parris
 Mr Gabriel Perez Almenares
 Ms Rakotovao Rabarijaona
 Ms Reyna Rosales
 Ms Silvana Russo Cardoso
 Mr Andris Smilgdrivs
 Mr Atsbeha Tesfaye
 Ms Juanita Theogarajah
 Ms Renee Williams
 Mr Bhekithemba Zwane

**MEMBERSHIP OF UNIT COMMITTEES,
COMMITTEE ON THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ISSUES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

(* not present at this meeting)

Committee on the General Secretariat

Ms Virginia Gcabashe - *Moderator*

Mr John Briggs - *Vice-Moderator*

- * Mr Charles Ajalat
- Rev. Ian Allsop
- Mrs Khushnud Azariah
- Barbara Bazett
- Most Rev. Edmond Browning
- Fr Vsevolod Chaplin
- Rev. Dr Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
- Mrs Maryon Jägers
- * Mrs Nagula Kathindi
- Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk
- Dr Günter Krusche
- Rev. Héctor Méndez
- Mrs Faith Mwondha
- Bishop Nifon of Slobozia & Calarasi
- Rt Rev. Dr Henry Okullu
- Most Rev. Tito Pasco
- * Dr Constantin Patelos
- Rev. Caroline Pattiasina-Toreh
- Most Rev. Michael Peers
- Ms Vidhya Rani
- Bishop Jan Szarek
- Bishop Melvin Talbert
- Dr Aaron Tolen
- Rev. Dr Eugene Turner
- Dr Daniel Weiss
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THE IMPACT OF HIV/AIDS AND THE CHURCHES' RESPONSE

A Statement adopted by the WCC Central Committee on the basis of the WCC Consultative Group on AIDS Study Process

I. Introduction

1. Already in 1987, the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches called the churches to address the urgent challenges posed by the spread of HIV/AIDS throughout the world. Appealing for an immediate and effective response in the areas of pastoral care, education for prevention, and social ministry, the Executive Committee noted that "The AIDS crisis challenges us profoundly to be the church in deed and in truth: *to be the Church as a healing community*".¹

2. The spread of HIV infection and AIDS has continued at a relentless and frightening pace. The cumulative number of persons infected by the virus - women, men and children on all continents - is about 28 million by mid 1996 and it is estimated that 7000 new infections occur each day, including 1,400 babies born infected. Individuals, communities, countries and churches are highly affected by this pandemic.

3. Given the tragic impact of AIDS on persons, communities and societies all over the world; given its direct impact upon many Christians and churches; recognizing the need for careful reflection on a number of inter-related issues bearing on the churches' understanding of and response to AIDS; and believing it imperative that the churches address *together* this issue of global concern: the WCC Central Committee at its meeting in Johannesburg in 1994 commissioned a comprehensive study to be done by a Consultative Group on AIDS.²

4. In its reflection the Group has focussed on theological and ethical issues raised by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, on questions of human rights in relation to AIDS, and on pastoral care and counselling within the church as a healing community. As it draws its findings into a final report, the Consultative Group wishes to make available the present statement indicating some of the main concerns and implications of its work. We request that this Statement

be *adopted* by the Central Committee, that the Report from the Study be *welcomed* by Central Committee, and that both be shared with the churches for their reflection and appropriate action.

II. The Impact of HIV/AIDS

5. HIV is a virus and, medically speaking, AIDS is the consequence of viral infection; but the issues raised by the pandemic are far from purely medical or clinical. They touch on cultural norms and practices, socio-economic conditions, issues of gender, economic development, human responsibility, sexuality and morality.

6. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is not just a matter of statistics. Its effects are impoverishing people, breaking their hearts, causing violations of their human rights, and wreaking havoc upon their bodies and spirits. Many who suffer do so in rejection and isolation. In a striking way HIV/AIDS has become a "spotlight" revealing many iniquitous conditions in our personal and community lives, revealing our inhumanity to one another, our broken relationships and unjust structures. It reveals the tragic consequences of personal actions which directly harm others, or of negligence which opens people to additional risk. The pandemic exposes any silence and indifference of the churches, challenging them to be better informed, more active, and more faithful witnesses to the gospel of reconciliation in their own lives and in their communities.

7. Almost every day there are new discoveries, new information, new hopes and accounts of how communities are affected by, and are dealing with, the challenge of HIV/AIDS. The reality of the pandemic seems increasingly complex, confounding the generalizations, stereotypes, and partial or false information which all too often dominate discussion of HIV/AIDS. We know, for example, that HIV/AIDS is not confined to particular groups within society, although in any given country particular groups may be more affected.

8. AIDS was first recognized in industrialized countries where, indeed, the vast majority of the funding for research, prevention and care has been concentrated. Now in its second decade, the pandemic is expanding fastest in countries with poor economies, where all the economic, political and social mechanisms that keep countries poor interact to produce a context in which AIDS thrives. Thus AIDS has become a development issue. The HIV/AIDS pandemic adds a heavy burden on health care systems. The cost of treatment

is often completely disproportionate to the incomes of the affected families. In Thailand, for example, the cost of treatment for one person with AIDS absorbs up to 50% of an average annual household income.

9. AIDS impacts societies in many ways, challenging some traditional notions of the social order. In some places, the pandemic is raising questions about the meaning and role of the family; elsewhere it has focussed attention on those using drugs, and their increased risk; still elsewhere it has raised questions about human sexuality and relationships. In the course of the pandemic the role of gay communities in compassionate care and effective prevention has been recognized. This perspective has challenged the churches to rethink their relation to gay persons.

10. The pandemic is also having profound consequences for family and community life. In addition to causing the illness and death of members of the most productive age groups, it severely restricts the opportunities for those - for the most part, women and girls - who care for persons suffering from the disease. In some societies whole communities are weakened by the pain and disruption HIV/AIDS brings to families and other basic social units. Grandparents find themselves caring for their sick children or orphaned grandchildren, and children and young people are forced to become the bread-winners for others.

III. The Beginnings of a Response

11. The challenges posed by AIDS require both a global and a local response. How can we develop the will, knowledge, attitudes, values and skills required to prevent the spread of AIDS without the concerted efforts of governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, churches and other faith communities?

12. A full range of inter-related approaches is called for. Effective methods of prevention include sexual abstinence, mutual fidelity, condom use and safe practices in relation to blood and needles. Education, including education for responsible sexual practices, has been shown to be effective in helping to stop the spread of the infection. Other measures which inhibit its spread, or help deal with the suffering which it causes, include advocacy for justice and human rights, the empowerment of women, the training of counsellors, and the creation of "safe spaces" where persons can share their stories and testimonies. In addition all societies - whether "developed" or developing - need to address practices such as drug abuse and commercial sex activity,

including the increasing incidence of child prostitution, as well as the root causes of destructive social conditions such as poverty, all of which favour the spread of HIV/AIDS.

13. Strategies for prevention and care may fail if those affected by HIV/AIDS play no part in designing or carrying them out. In the course of the current study, the Consultative Group noted the role played by the WCC in promoting participatory action research on "AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing" in three African countries.³ This process enabled village people to analyze the issues and problems raised by AIDS, and to develop actions which foster prevention and care.

14. From the beginning of the pandemic some Christians, churches and church-related institutions have been active in education and prevention programmes, and in caring for people living with HIV/AIDS. The Consultative Group was privileged to have worked with several of these during the study. The Group observes, however, that by and large the response of the churches has been inadequate and has, in some cases, even made the problem worse. As the WCC Executive Committee noted in 1987, "...through their silence, many churches share responsibility for the fear that has swept our world more quickly than the virus itself"⁴. Sometimes churches have hampered the spread of accurate information, or created barriers to open discussion and understanding. Further, churches may reinforce racist attitudes if they neglect issues of HIV/AIDS because it occurs predominantly among certain ethnic or racial groups. These groups may be unjustly stigmatized as the most likely carriers of the infection.

15. The situation continues to call for "metanoia in faith", and a fresh resolve by the churches to address the situation directly. This must be done in a spirit of humility, knowing that we do not fully understand the scope and significance of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. It requires openness to new information, long discussion of sensitive issues, and readiness to learn from the experience of others, as we seek a more adequate response to the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS today.

IV. Theological Dimensions

16. The HIV/AIDS pandemic raises difficult theological issues in the areas of creation, human nature, the nature of sin and death, the Christian hope for eternal life, and the role of the church as Body of Christ. Furthermore the reality of AIDS raises issues, such as human sexuality, vulnerability and

mortality, which stir and challenge us in a deeply personal way. Christians and the churches struggle with these theological and human issues and they differ, sometimes sharply, in their response to some of the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS. But it is imperative that they learn to face the issues *together* rather than separately, and that they work towards a common understanding of the fundamental questions -theological, anthropological and ecclesiological - which are involved.

17. The church's response to the challenge of HIV/AIDS comes from its deepest theological convictions about the nature of creation, the unshakeable fidelity of God's love, the nature of the body of Christ and the reality of Christian hope.

18. The creation in all its dimensions is held within the sphere of God's pervasive love, a love characterized by relationship, expressed in the vision of the Trinity as a model of intimate interaction, of mutual respect and sharing without domination. This inclusive love characteristic of the Trinity guides our understanding of the Christian claim that men and women are made in the "image of God". Because humanity is created in God's image, all human beings are beloved by God and all are held within the scope of God's concern and faithful care.

19. Within the fullness of creation we affirm the potential for goodness of the human body and of human sexuality. We do not completely comprehend the meaning of human sexuality. As with other aspects of creation, sexuality also can be misused when people do not recognize their personal responsibility; but it is to be affirmed strongly as one of God's good gifts, finding expression in many dimensions of human existence. The churches have recognized marriage as the primary place for the expression of sexuality in its various dimensions.

20. We live from God's promise that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ: no disasters, no illness or disease, nothing done by us and nothing done to us, not even death itself, can break God's solidarity with us and with all creation (Rom. 8:38-39). And yet the creation "groans in travail" (Rom. 8:22); we see in the world much suffering, injustice and waste. Some of this can be understood as the consequence, for ourselves and others, of the exercise of the freedom given by God to God's creatures; some of it, we sense, may be part of a larger pattern of which we now glimpse only a part; some of it defies understanding, leaving us to cry: "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24).

21. Finally we live by hope, holding our questions and doubts within the larger frame of God's love and final purpose for our lives and for all creation: life abundant, where justice reigns, where each is free to explore all the gifts God has given them. More particularly, we live by hope in Christ: Christ gone before us into glory is the basis for our hope. We share in the sufferings of Christ - Christ who is Immanuel, "God with us" - "that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom 8:17). And in our weakness we are sustained by the "Spirit who lives within us", interceding when we know not how to pray, and finally granting anew "life to our mortal bodies" (cf. Rom. 8:11, 26; cf. Eph. 3:16).

22. Strengthened by this hope, we wrestle with the profound questions put to us by suffering. We affirm that suffering does not come from God. We affirm that God is with us even in the midst of sickness and suffering, working for healing and salvation even in "the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). And we affirm that it is through bearing the suffering of the world on the cross that God, in Christ, has redeemed all of creation. Our hope is rooted, ultimately, in our experience of God's saving acts in Jesus Christ, in Christ's life, death and resurrection from the dead.

23. Remembering the suffering servant (Is. 42:1-9, 49:1-7, 50:4-11, 52:13-53:12), we are called to share the sufferings of persons living with HIV/AIDS, opening ourselves, in this encounter, to our own vulnerability and mortality. This is to walk with Christ; and, as Christ has gone before us through death to glory, we are called to receive "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection." This is God's promise that God's promise, for us and for all creation, is not destroyed by death: we are held within the love of God, claimed by Christ as his own, and sustained by the Spirit: and God will neither forsake us nor leave us to oblivion.

24. We affirm that the church as the body of Christ is to be the place where God's healing love is experienced and shown forth. As the body of Christ the church is bound to enter into the suffering of others, to stand with them against all rejection and despair. Because it is the body of *Christ* - who died for all and who enters into the suffering of all humanity - the church cannot exclude anyone who needs Christ. As the church enters into solidarity with those affected by HIV/AIDS, our hope in God's promise comes alive and becomes visible to the world.

25. We celebrate the commitment of many Christians and churches to show Christ's love to those affected by HIV/AIDS. We confess that Christians and churches have also helped to stigmatize and discriminate against persons

affected by HIV/AIDS, thus adding to their suffering. We recall with gratitude the advice of St. Basil the Great to those in leadership positions within the church, emphasizing their responsibility to create an environment - an ethos, a "disposition" - where the cultivation of love and goodness can prevail within the community and issue in the "good moral action" which is love⁵.

26. We affirm that God calls us to live in right relationship with other human beings and with all of creation. As a reflection of God's embracing love, this relationship should be marked not just by mutual respect but by active concern for the other. Actions taken deliberately which harm oneself, others or the creation are sinful; and indeed we are challenged by the persistence of sin, which is the distortion of this right relationship with God, other persons, or the natural order. Yet sin does not have the last word; as we are "renewed by the Holy Spirit" (cf. Titus 3:5) and continue to grow in our communion with God, our lives will show forth more of God's love and care.

27. The World Council of Churches Executive Committee emphasized in a 1987 statement the need "...to affirm that God deals with us in love and mercy and that we are therefore freed from simplistic moralizing about those who are attacked by the virus."⁶ Furthermore we note how easily a moralistic approach can distort life within the Christian community, hampering the sharing of information and open discussion which are so important in facing the reality of HIV/AIDS, and in inhibiting its spread.

28. In the light of these reflections, and on the basis of our experience in this study, we wish to avoid any implication that HIV/AIDS, or indeed any disease or misfortune, is a direct "punishment" from God. We affirm that the response of Christians and the churches to those affected by HIV/AIDS should be one of love and solidarity, expressed both in care and support for those touched directly by the disease, and in efforts to prevent its spread.

V. Ethical Dimensions

29. In responding to the challenge of HIV/AIDS Christians are motivated by urgent imperatives, passionately felt: to show Christ's love for the neighbour, to save lives, to work for reconciliation, to see that justice is done. Making ethical decisions, however, requires a process of *discernment* which includes gathering the latest information, wrestling with deeply sensitive issues, and weighing differing, sometimes conflicting views and interests. This process needs to be undergirded by bible study, prayer and theological reflection.

30. Christians make ethical choices following principles which derive from their understanding of the biblical witness and their faith convictions. These may be stated and developed differently in various traditions, but are likely to include the following points:

- because all human beings are created and beloved by God, Christians are called to treat every person as of infinite value;
- because Christ died to reconcile all to God, Christians are called to work for true reconciliation - which includes justice - among those alienated from one another;
- because we are "members one of another", being built up by the Spirit into one body, Christians are called to responsible life within community.

31. Such principles - the infinite value of each person, the gospel of reconciliation, the call to responsible life within community - have to be applied to such questions as: How do churches respond to their members living with HIV/AIDS? How can churches promote responsible behaviour without being judgmental and moralistic? What public health measures to reduce HIV/AIDS transmission should churches advocate? How can resources for care and research be fairly shared? This means in each case exploring all available options, weighing the benefits (and difficulties) of each, and finally asking, "which of the possible courses of action best expresses Christ's love for all those involved?"

32. Such a process of "discernment" is often difficult: the options may not be fully clear; none of the options may be wholly satisfactory; the implications of some biblical or theological principles for specific problems today may not be clear. It is all the more important, then, that Christians and churches reflect and work on these ethical issues *together*. The challenge of HIV/AIDS demands nothing less than an *ecumenical* response.

33. Churches are expected to give both spiritual direction and moral guidance, and to play a responsible role in the discussion of these issues in the wider society, as well as in discussions of biomedical ethics. Witnessing to their own faith convictions, they enrich the wider debate and make common cause, where possible, with persons of goodwill who appeal to more general sets of ethical principles such as respect for persons, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice.

34. The churches have crucial contributions to make to this wider debate. For example first, in accordance with their commitment to *truth* they can emphasize that the process of ethical discernment leaves no room for judgments based on superficial generalizations or stereotypes, on fear, or on incomplete or false information. The churches can do much to promote, both in their own lives and in the wider society, a climate of sensitive, factual and open exploration of the ethical issues posed by the pandemic.

35. Second, in accordance with their emphasis upon *personal and communal responsibility* the churches can promote conditions - personal, cultural, and socio-economic - which support persons in making responsible choices. This requires a degree of personal freedom which is not always available: for example women, even within marriage, may not have the power to say "no" or to insist on the practice of such effective preventive measures such as abstinence, mutual fidelity and condom use.

VI. Human Rights in Relation to HIV/AIDS

36. The HIV/AIDS pandemic raises important issues relating to human rights. People living with HIV/AIDS generally encounter fear, rejection and discrimination, and often are denied basic rights (such as liberty, autonomy, security, and freedom of movement) enjoyed by the rest of the population. Because such reactions contradict the values of the gospel, the churches are called to formulate and advocate a clear policy of non-discrimination against persons living with HIV/AIDS.

37. One of the tasks of the WCC over the last three decades has been to be actively involved in human rights standard setting, and promotion and protection. The last decade has witnessed a significant trend in the development of international norms and standards in relation to people that are discriminated on grounds of race, gender, ethnicity and religion. There are other kinds of discrimination as well. Some of them arise because of lack of awareness and fear. People living with HIV/AIDS fall in this category. They are often denied their fundamental right to security, freedom of association, movement and adequate health care.

38. The issue of human rights also has important implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS. We note the alarming rise in sex tourism. Some men in societies in both the North and the South abuse the young and poor children for prostitution or in an effort to try to escape infection. This is also an issue

of violence against children. We further note that men and women who are denied their fundamental human rights, whether on the grounds of social status, sexual orientation, or addiction to drugs, are thereby made especially vulnerable to the risk of HIV infection. Thus broadly-based strategies which advocate human rights are required to prevent the spread of HIV.

VII. Pastoral Care and Counselling within the Church as Healing Community

39. By their very nature as communities of faith in Christ, churches are called to be healing communities. This call becomes the more insistent as the AIDS pandemic continues to grow. Within the churches we are increasingly confronted with persons affected by HIV/AIDS, seeking support and solidarity and asking: are you willing to be my brother and sister within the one body of Christ? In this encounter our very credibility is at stake.

40. Many churches, indeed, have found that their own lives have been enhanced by the witness of persons living with HIV/AIDS. These have reminded us that it is possible to affirm life even when faced with severe, incurable illness and serious physical limitation, that sickness and death are not the standard by which life is measured, that it is the quality of life - whatever its length - that is most important. Such a witness invites the churches to respond with love and faithful caring.

41. Despite the extent and complexity of the problems, the churches can make an effective healing witness towards those affected by HIV/AIDS. The experience of love, acceptance and support within a community where God's love is made manifest can be a powerful healing force. Healing is fostered where churches relate to daily life, and where people feel safe to share their stories and testimonies. Through sensitive worship, churches help persons enter the healing presence of God. The churches exercise a vital ministry through encouraging discussion and analysis of information, helping to identify problems, and supporting participation towards constructive change in the community.

42. Many trained and gifted members of the community, as well as some pastors, are already providing valuable pastoral care. Such care includes counselling as a process for empowerment of persons affected by HIV/AIDS, in order to help them deal with their situation and to prevent or reduce HIV transmission.

VIII. Conclusion: What the churches can do

43. This study has shown us the delicate, interwoven relationships of human beings and their connectedness to all of life. It has proved neither desirable nor possible to do a "one-dimensional" study of AIDS, describing only its dramatic spread and devastating impact on those who are directly affected. Rather, the AIDS pandemic requires the analysis of a cluster of inter-related factors. These include the theological and ethical perspectives that inform, or arise from, our understanding of AIDS; the effects of poverty on individuals and communities; issues of justice and human rights; the understanding of human relationships; and the understanding of human sexuality. Of these the factor of sexuality has received the least attention within the ecumenical community. We recognize that further study in this area is essential for a deeper understanding of the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.

44. Our exploration of these themes has brought us face to face with issues, understandings, and attitudes of major consequence to the churches and their role in responding to the pandemic. Through their witness to the gospel of reconciliation, the value of each person, and the importance of responsible life in community, the churches have a distinctive and crucial role to play in facing the challenges raised by HIV/AIDS. But their witness must be visible and active. Therefore we feel it essential to highlight the following concerns as points for common reflection and action by the churches:

A. The life of the churches: responses to the challenge of HIV/AIDS

1. We ask the churches to provide a climate of love, acceptance and support for those who are vulnerable to, or affected by, HIV/AIDS.
2. We ask the churches to reflect together on the theological basis for their response to the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS.
3. We ask the churches to reflect together on the ethical issues raised by the pandemic, interpret them in their local context and to offer guidance to those confronted by difficult choices.
4. We ask the churches to participate in the discussion in society at large of ethical issues posed by HIV/AIDS, and to support their own members who, as health care professionals, face difficult ethical choices in the areas of prevention and care.

B. The witness of the churches: in relation to immediate effects and causes of HIV/AIDS

1. We ask the churches to work for better care for persons affected by HIV/AIDS.
2. We ask the churches to give particular attention to the conditions of infants and children affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and seek ways to build a supportive environment.
3. We ask the churches to help safeguard the rights of persons affected by HIV/AIDS, and to study, develop, promote the human rights of people living with HIV/AIDS through mechanisms at national and international levels.
4. We ask the churches to promote the sharing of accurate information about HIV/AIDS, to promote a climate of open discussion, and to work against the spread of misinformation and fear.
5. We ask the churches to advocate increased spending by governments and medical facilities to find solutions to the problems - both medical and social - raised by the pandemic.

C. The witness of the churches: in relation to long-term causes and factors encouraging the spread of HIV/AIDS

1. We ask the churches to recognize the linkage between AIDS and poverty, and to advocate measures to promote just and sustainable development.
2. We urge that special attention be focussed on situations that increase the vulnerability to AIDS such as migrant labour, mass refugee movements and commercial sex activity.
3. In particular, we ask the churches to work with women as they seek to attain the full measure of their dignity and express the full range of their gifts.
4. We ask the churches to educate and involve youth and men in order to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.

5. We ask the churches to seek to understand more fully the gift of human sexuality in the contexts of personal responsibility, relationships, family and Christian faith.
 6. We ask the churches to address the pandemic of drug use and the role this plays in the spread of HIV/AIDS and to develop locally relevant responses in terms of care, de-addiction, rehabilitation and prevention.
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Notes

1. *Central Committee of the World Council of Churches: Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Meeting*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1987, Appendix VI, "AIDS and the Church as a Healing Community", p. 133.
2. *Central Committee of the World Council of Churches: Minutes of the Forty-Fifth Meeting*, Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1994, pp. 45-49, 102-103.
3. See *Participatory Action Research on AIDS and the Community as a Source of Care and Healing*, Geneva, Christian Medical Board of Tanzania, Uganda Protestant Medical Bureau, Eglise du Christ au Zaïre, and World Council of Churches, 1993.
4. *Central Committee of the World Council of Churches: Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Meeting*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
5. *Ascetic Works*, 2.1.
6. *Central Committee of the World Council of Churches: Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Meeting*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

NOTE ON THE CONTEMPORARY ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

*(Commended to the member churches for further study and reflection
in preparation for the WCC Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe)*

At this meeting of Central Committee, attention focused on preparations for the Eighth Assembly, the Common Understanding and Vision of the World Council of Churches, Ecclesiology and Ethics, and reconsideration of ecumenical priorities in a time of severe financial constraints. This was an appropriate context in which to review the Council's engagement in international affairs and public issues since the Canberra Assembly.

In each period of the life of the Council, succeeding Central Committees have had to respond to urgent crises, to analyze trends in world affairs and to promote a common witness among the churches for peace and justice. Each has identified areas where deeper study was required on the causes of the inequalities and injustice which lead to conflict and war. Ecumenical programmes have been elaborated and initiatives taken to inform the churches and enable them to act together, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to address the structural causes of oppression, division, and violations of the life and dignity of God's people and the integrity of God's creation.

But few, if any, of the Central Committees since 1948 have devoted so much time and energy to public issues as have those chosen to guide the Council since the Sixth Assembly in Vancouver. No other Central Committee prior to this one has had to struggle with such rapid, radical and fundamental change in international relations, or with such complex realities. Now, as the churches prepare for Harare and the daunting task they will have there to equip the ecumenical movement for mission, witness and service on the threshold of the new millennium, it is important for the Central Committee to take stock of what it has learned in this time of transition from one stage of history to another.

These reflections seek to provide a framework for that assessment, and to pose some of the questions arising from our work together since Canberra and which require the attention of the ecumenical movement.

Coping with the "New World Order"

The period of preparation for the Seventh Assembly was one of uncertainty, but of considerable hope for the future. The precipitate collapse of Communism which began in 1989 opened up remarkable new opportunities in international affairs. In rapid succession, a series of national and regional conflicts were quickly resolved as the former Cold-War enemy powers found new ways to cooperate. The United Nations, long blocked from the use of the strongest peacemaking powers available in the Charter, put in place new mechanisms for conflict management and to keep and build peace.

But on the eve of Canberra, the use of these powers was usurped by a group of nations led by the sole remaining superpower in a way which put the integrity of the world body to a rude test. The issues raised have had serious repercussions in the ecumenical movement.

Christian Attitudes on Violence and War

"Operation Desert Storm" raised the question: Who may use instruments of war to deal with conflicts, in what circumstances, and under what authority?

The Gulf War provoked great international controversy, and gave rise to one of the most important, difficult and contentious debates in an assembly since the one in Amsterdam over how the ecumenical movement ought to relate to Communism and the socialist states, stimulated by the heated exchange between Czech theologian Josef Hromadka and U.S. statesman John Foster Dulles. The Canberra debate reopened the old, seemingly unbreachable, gap between those who believe that Christians must reject absolutely the use of violence as a means to resolve conflict, and those who believe that, under strict conditions and as a last resort, the use of violence may be unavoidable and necessary.

The heated character of this debate came as a rude surprise to those who believed that the bold statement of the Vancouver Assembly and the subsequent affirmation of the Seoul Convocation on JPIC (1990) showed that a new consensus was being shaped on the morality and theological justification of war and the use of violence in international affairs. It showed how divided the churches remain on crucial theological, ecclesiological and political issues.

These differences surfaced anew in subsequent debates in the Central

Committee, most notably in connection with war in the former Yugoslavia, but also around the ethics of armed "humanitarian intervention" in situations of complex emergencies.

Many questions arose, among them:

- What alternatives has the church to offer to violence as a response to conflict?
- What can the church do to lower or eradicate the incidence of violence in society?
- How can the churches and Christians strengthen their capacity to remain in dialogue on deeply divisive social and political issues?

Some attempts to find answers were made:

- The use of sanctions, short of the use of armed violence, was seen to be a workable alternative to bring an offending party into compliance with international law, and a set of criteria were elaborated on when and under what conditions the church might advocate the application of sanctions.
- A Programme to Overcome Violence was launched to stimulate reflection and action in the churches to help reverse the tide of violence in and between societies.

But it may be asked:

- Have we been effective in moving from declaration and affirmation to action?
- Have we spoken in such a way that what we say can be heard by, and make a difference to the churches?
- Have we helped to make the universal Christian witness meaningful and potent in a needy and confused world?

The Crisis in "Global Governance"

The Canberra statement on the Gulf War also dealt with the broader consequences of the Security Council decisions which authorized a massive

military operation in the Gulf. It warned of the far-reaching consequences of pursuing a "New World Order" dominated by an emerging coalition of major powers. This Central Committee offered additional critiques of the impact of the "New World Order" on the role and functioning of global institutions, and noted the waning effectiveness and credibility of intergovernmental bodies. It reiterated the ecumenical position that an effective United Nations, responsive to the will and the needs of the peoples of the world is essential, while drawing attention to the weaknesses of that world body today.

It has not been easy for the churches to discuss the UN without falling into the trap either of uncritical support for the world body, or of joining those voices who make it a scapegoat for the chaotic world situation. Here, too, attitudes are widely divided in the churches.

Questions arise here such as:

- In a time of widespread proliferation of complex, often competing and overlapping international institutions at world and regional levels, how can the church maintain sufficient distance to be able to reflect on what kind of institutions are needed today? How can we remain close enough to them to be able to influence their behaviour, promote constructive reforms, and support conscientious and effective international civil servants who share our concerns?
- What could the churches do more effectively to ensure that the "voice of the peoples" is more effectively represented in the debates and the programmatic activities of the United Nations?

The Central Committee has not been concerned only about global institutions, but about the crisis in confidence with respect to political institutions at every level of society. It has considered the role of "civil society" as a means of pressuring political institutions to fulfil their responsibility to respond to the will of the citizenry. It has been suggested that "civil society movements" may be the harbinger of new forms of governance.

- What has the church to say about waning confidence in and the diminution of the power of the state?
- How can Christians and their churches exercise the responsibilities of citizenship vis-à-vis their own states and governments and at the same time retain the capacity to call them to accountability when they fail in their responsibilities?

- What roles do we see for "civil society" movements in the process of governance?
- How can civil society movements themselves be protected from the temptations of dogmatism and institutional rigidity?
- Will the churches, as they appeal for greater inclusiveness and democracy in the institutions of governance, apply the same critique to themselves and reform their own systems of government when they fail to meet the same standards?

Globalization of the Economy and Culture

A dominant feature of the post-Cold-War "disorder" has been the imposition on global society of the neo-liberal form of "free market" economy. In the name of the "market," the power of weak states to defend the sovereignty and national interests of their own people has been severely eroded, and in some cases destroyed. Fundamental principles of justice and fairness in international relations give way under the onslaught of profit-seekers. Ours has become a world of double standards, one set for the rich, another for the poor. People despair, and anger and frustration abound. No other set of forces in our time has such a debilitating and divisive impact on community, nation, state and church.

In every society the impact has been felt through the inability or the abandonment by the state of its responsibilities to deliver social services to the most vulnerable. Unemployment is on the rise. The gap between rich and poor grows wider than ever.

Nowhere has this become so clear as in our discussions on the plight of Africa. Shortly after Canberra, the Executive Committee adopted a "Minute on Africa" which called for intensive WCC attention to the situation of this continent and its churches. In the extensive statement of the Johannesburg Central Committee on "Contemporary Challenges to Africa" the impact of globalization on this continent was drawn out in detail. Through the lens of Africa we saw how the social fragmentation resulting from globalization alienates communities from their own cultures and traditions, renders them vulnerable to new, often destructive religious movements, to religious and other forms of extremism, and thus to destructive conflict.

Traditional means of dealing with conflict in many cultures are pushed to the margins. The flourishing, unregulated trade in arms of every sort has

rendered African and other poor societies, which have borne the brunt of globalization, vulnerable to fratricidal warfare.

The churches in both poor and rich societies are also besieged by these divisive and fragmenting forces. Many have been set against one another in competition for "souls" and diminishing resources. When they have resisted globalization, many have become targets of destabilization campaigns. Others have been overwhelmed - and at times consciously marginalized - by the burdens they have taken up in ministering to those abandoned by the state: refugees, displaced persons and migrants, abandoned and abused children, women and others who suffer most from the violence of uncaring societies, the sick and the elderly.

The process of globalization is more complex and is impelled by more powerful forces than anything we have had to face in our time. It is pervasive, systemic and often faceless. It reveals a profound moral, ethical and even spiritual breakdown in society. It lays bare the inadequacy of many of our customary tools of analysis.

- How can the churches resist the forces of division and fragmentation today?
- As the forces of globalization put on the cloak of "internationalism" and even of "ecumenism," how can the Church, the One Body of Christ, make its understanding of universality heard? How can the ecumenical movement manifest in social and political terms the unity given in Christ and the sovereignty of God over all human powers?
- How is the moral voice of the church to be used in the face of such widespread economic, cultural and political immorality?

The Resurgence of Racism, Ethnocentrism and Nationality Conflicts

By the time of the Central Committee meeting in Geneva in 1992, Soviet domination of Eastern and Central Europe had come to an end, and the Soviet Union itself had disintegrated. Ethnic and national conflicts had exploded throughout the former Communist world. Open wars were raging in the Caucasus and the Balkans. Many of these took on a religious character, and member churches of the WCC were caught up in several of them directly.

The ugly head of racism and xenophobia rose up in many parts of the world as movements reminiscent of the worst days of fascism attacked racial and ethnic minorities. Old ethnic and tribal tensions were growing, especially in some of the world's poorest regions. The simultaneous upsurge of religious extremism and intolerance left many minority populations virtually defenceless. The religious factor moved to the centre of ever more violent social and political conflicts.

Two of the most baffling, complex and shocking conflicts came in rapid succession: the war of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia, and the Rwandan genocide. The debates stirred by these two tragedies which have often dominated the public issues agenda since 1992 have been reminiscent of the ones in Canberra.

Many of the questions the Central Committee raised in its statement on the former Yugoslavia at its last meeting (Geneva, 1995) apply not just to that situation but everywhere where church and nation, church and ethnic group have such an inseparable bond that Christians risk being blinded to the demands of the gospel. They remain unanswered and continue to pose fundamental challenges for the churches' life together. For example:

- What is the nature of the ecumenical fellowship and what does Christian unity require in a divided world?
- Does membership of the Council make churches accountable to and responsible for one another in such times?
- Can a church which fails to distance itself from and vigorously resist the use of violence by its own nation and people disqualify itself from membership?

Again in this sphere, the inextricable relationship between ecumenical responsibilities in international affairs, mission, service and in the fields of ecclesiology, doctrinal unity and Christian social ethics has been underscored.

Confession, Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Commemorations of events related to the end of the Second World War led the Central and Executive Committees to reflect on what it requires to become a truly confessing church. In their 1995 Pentecost Message, the Presidents of the Council urged the churches to take that opportunity to "proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ...to recapture the vision of peace

among reconciled communities and peoples...to confess that we have failed to build the foundations of a just peace, to repent our sin of disunity as churches and peoples." This is a time of jubilee, they said, a time to forgive and seek forgiveness, "to restore right relations among neighbours and with God;" a time to say to the nations, "Turn to God - Rejoice in Hope."

Our wrestling with such intractable conflicts as those in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda brought to mind the admonition of the prophet Jeremiah:

They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace (6:14).

We were reminded how humanity's repeated failure to heal deeply the wounds inflicted by one people against another, or by brutal regimes upon their own nations, has led to rising spirals of retributive violence. Justice has too rarely been done. The pain of the victims has too seldom been assuaged. Impunity has too easily been granted to offenders. And the international community has too seldom brought the authors of crimes against humanity to the bar of judgment under international law. True reconciliation has rarely occurred. The accumulation of offenses on all sides, and our failure to heal the memory of injured peoples has contributed to a proliferation of what came to be known as "complex emergencies".

After decades of dealing with what seemed to be clear-cut issues of right and wrong, the churches have been confronted with new moral and ethical dilemmas.

- What do we do when there is no "just" solution, when the "legitimate" claims for justice by the several parties to a conflict deny justice to the other?
- What moral criteria do we apply when to judge the one and absolve the other is itself an act of injustice?

We belong to a generation schooled in Cold-War thinking based on the identification of an enemy and the confrontation of absolute good and evil. Debates among the churches since Canberra have shown that it is as difficult for the churches as it is for policy makers to escape the distortions and limitations of this way of looking at things. In retrospect, many have come to see that reality was seldom, if ever, so simple. Good and evil, justice and injustice, righteousness and unrighteousness are omnipresent. What we are

gradually discovering is that they are most often present together on different sides of disputes. We need a fresh approach.

- How can the churches free themselves from bondage to the past and live out a model of caring and respectful dialogue which we can consistently apply and offer to others as an alternative?
- Can the churches learn a new way of looking at conflict which can enable us to see the humanity of people on all sides?
- What can the churches contribute to the shaping of new modes of thinking which take seriously the historical roots of conflict and approach it on its own terms, rather than on ours?

Our approach to the law is key to our understanding of justice. Frequently during this period resort has been had to law as a political instrument to punish those perceived to be the enemy, but it has rarely contributed significantly to the resolution of a conflict or the healing of the deep wounds of history. The international tribunals hastily established to identify and try those charged with crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have been perceived to lack impartiality and thus effectiveness. Some have suggested that such special judicial bodies are too susceptible to the politics of the moment, and that they should be replaced by a Permanent International Criminal Court endowed with authority to assure fair, consistent and equitable administration of international law.

Such matters are a legitimate and important concern of the churches, and may demand more considered attention in the future. But our experience since Canberra shows that the law alone is insufficient to bring lasting justice or a durable peace. Here, too, we see the intersection of theological affirmation and the church's responsibility in the world of nations. Jesus came to fulfil the law, but at the same time to free us from bondage to an absolutist system of law based on retribution. His message of forgiveness has shown itself anew to be not just a requirement of the faith, but a political necessity if we are ever to overcome ancient enmities, our tendency to pursue justice on our own terms and at any price, and our penchant to resort to violence in the name of peace and justice.

The ecumenical movement has repeatedly affirmed that there can be no peace without justice. We have learned that there are times when there can be no justice if there is not some peace.

We now must ask again:

- What is the relationship between peace and justice? If they are intertwined, how do we work as church to achieve both?
- Some of our absolutist statements of the past may have led us to miss opportunities to witness effectively in the present. How do we retain a prophetic voice and remain able to respond to crises which demand nuanced thinking and action?
- How can we oppose the granting of impunity for serious crimes against humanity in a way which can contribute to healing the wounds of history, and at the same time respond to the requirement of new democracies for stability in a time when the criminals of the past continue to wield power?
- How are truth-telling, impunity, forgiveness and reconciliation related?

The Contemporary Challenge to the Church in International Affairs

The issues have become much more complex. Our tools of analysis need to be refined, and some corrected. And if, as it appears, we are in a time of deep moral crisis we should reflect anew on how the church can bring the moral voice of faith more consciously and effectively to bear in our actions and statements on public issues.

It is troubling to note that in precisely such a time many churches have become introspective, and tend to devote more of their attention and resources to their own institutional and confessional realities and pressing domestic concerns. Our resources are dwindling, but the demands upon the church are great. We need to consider how the Council can encourage and enable the churches to maintain a sense of universal responsibility and ways within our means to exercise it more effectively.

THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

(revised text approved by Central Committee, September 1996)

Preamble

Scripture very clearly affirms the oneness of Christ's Church (John 17, Eph. 4). Such an affirmation requires that the various churches should not remain in isolation but should seek to be in relationship with one another. The Rules of the WCC speak of the *"essential interdependence of the churches"* (Rule I.3.c). For the future of the ecumenical movement it has become imperative to spell out what the significance is of the multiple relationships that bind the churches together within the ecumenical movement in general, and within the WCC in particular.

This paper reflects the meaning of WCC membership as it is presently understood. Its substance will be incorporated in the Common Understanding and Vision process which may eventually lead to a more adequate expression of the same.

"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

1. The WCC is a *fellowship of churches* of differing traditions and confessions (cf. the Basis). To accept the Basis is not only to confess the central elements of Christian faith as expressed in it; it is to do so *together* with other churches and thereby to affirm that this common confession constitutes the members into a fellowship which seeks to live towards the *koinonia* to which Christians are called, remembering the metaphor of the human body used by St. Paul (I Cor. 12). As a global body, the nature of the community is one that transcends the barriers of nations, cultures and regions. The global dimension of the WCC is at once a treasure and a challenge. At a time when many local communities experience the need to affirm their particularities it is necessary for the churches to appropriate anew for themselves the fundamental dimension of their identity as members belonging to one global fellowship.

2. The WCC embraces a wide representation of different Christian traditions. It is at present the most adequate and "*privileged*" instrument to manifest and safeguard the wholeness of the ecumenical movement. Because of this the quality of the fellowship embodied by the WCC is of supreme importance.

3. The fellowship of the WCC seeks to be an *inclusive community*. It affirms the dignity and equality of all God's people, without respect for gender, age, race, social status or any other criteria dividing the human community. Each church is called to live this out in its own social context, as well as in relationship with other churches.

4. To belong to the WCC means sharing with other churches a *common ecumenical vision* and putting it into practice within the life and witness of each church, in the first place within its own local situation. The ecumenical vision that holds the fellowship together is based on that unity in Christ that is both gift and promise. It is expressed in the commitment by the members to "*call each other to the goal of visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship*" It is a dynamic vision that is constantly being reshaped as the churches grow together towards the fullness that is in Christ. This requires the readiness to be renewed by the action of the Spirit in encounter with other member churches which do not observe the eucharistic rite. Through such renewal the churches are enabled to implement this common vision in their local context.

5. To join the fellowship of the WCC means striving to give tangible, though incomplete, expression to the *universality and catholicity* of the church. Member churches experience the discovery of this common identity as a gain. There is however no requirement for any church to give up its own identity but rather to share it with others and thereby to promote renewal and enrichment of all.

6. To be a member means entering the *wider ecumenical reality* of a fellowship in which the churches grow together and seek that deeper quality of fellowship which enables them to work together in common witness.

7. To be a member means, in the power of the Spirit, nurturing the ability of churches from differing backgrounds and traditions *to pray, live, act and grow together in community*, at times through struggle and conflict. It implies the willingness and capacity to deal with disagreement through theological discussion, prayer and dialogue. The reality of cultural, social and religious plurality which characterize the world today calls the churches to

live out and celebrate their oneness whilst recognizing the rich diversity of thought and practice.

8. To be a member means that within the fellowship there must be found a place for churches *to help one another to be faithful to the gospel, and to question one another* if any member is perceived to move away from the fundamentals of the faith or obedience to the gospel. Whilst member churches hold one another to be accountable to the gospel, the integrity of the fellowship is preserved through the exercise of responsibility for one another in the spirit of common faithfulness to the gospel, rather than by judgment and exclusion.

9. To be a member means participating in *ministries that extend beyond the boundaries and possibilities of any single church*. The fellowship enables the churches to speak and act on issues on which their individual voice and action would be not possible or less effective. Through the WCC, local churches can speak and act globally. Membership implies the readiness of the churches to link their specific local contexts with the global reality and allow that global reality to impact on their local situations.

10. To be a member means to be part of *a fellowship that has a voice of its own*. Through its governing bodies, the WCC may speak on behalf of the churches when requested to do so; it may speak to the churches calling them to action, prayer and reflection. The WCC has the freedom to go where not all the member churches may be able to go. The churches are also free not to identify themselves with the voice of the WCC. Yet they should give serious consideration to what the Council says or does on behalf of the fellowship as a whole.

11. To be a member means that the church commits itself to seek *to implement the agreements* reached through the joint theological study and reflection of the total fellowship, within its own life and witness.

12. To be a member of the WCC means to participate in a *fellowship of sharing and solidarity*. The churches are called to support one another in their needs and struggles, and to celebrate together their joys and hopes. Sharing is expressed in spiritual support and informed intercession for each other and financial assistance. It is a mutual process in which each church is acknowledged as both being able to give, and being in need to receive. Within the fellowship it is the gifts God has entrusted to the churches that count (I Cor. 12), not poverty and wealth or weakness and strength measured in material terms and numbers.

13. To be a member means understanding the mission of the church as a joint responsibility shared with others. The churches are called to accept the discipline of *common witness*. This implies that they do not engage in missionary or evangelistic activities in isolation from each other, much less in competition or proselytism of other Christian believers, especially in situations where they work within the same territorial boundaries.

14. To be a member means to enter into a fellowship which seeks to be a fellowship of *worship and prayer* with the other member churches. In this, the limitations imposed by specific traditions are fully respected, while concrete opportunities for shared worship and prayer are nurtured.

15. Each member church is expected *to take a full part* in the life and work of the Council and its programmes. This means ensuring that:

- a) they pray for the Council and for one another within the fellowship;
- b) they are represented at assemblies;
- c) they make an annual equitable membership contribution to the funds of the Council;
- d) they commit themselves to share the concerns of the Council with their local congregations;
- e) they take such other opportunities as shall from time to time be found appropriate to work within the fellowship of the Council.

The text of the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by representatives of the World Council of Churches, The Zimbabwe Council of Churches and the Government of Zimbabwe was made available to the members of Central Committee for their information.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING IS MADE BETWEEN
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES,
hereinafter called "the WCC" and
ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES,
hereinafter called "the ZCC" and
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE,
hereinafter called "the government".

WHEREAS the WCC is an international ecumenical organization having a worldwide membership of 324 national councils and churches of diverse cultures, histories and traditions,

AND WHEREAS in accordance with its constitution, the WCC is required to convene a General Assembly of its member churches once every seven years; such Assembly being held in a country from which an invitation is received from a member church,

AND WHEREAS the WCC has received an invitation from the ZCC to hold its Eighth General Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, 1998, the invitation having been issued with the consent and agreement of the government,

AND WHEREAS one of the goals of the WCC is "to express concern of the churches in the service of human need, the breaking down of barriers between people, and the promotion of one human family in justice and peace"; in pursuance of this objective WCC actively works for the promotion and protection of human rights including the right to freedom of expression, thought and belief,

AND WHEREAS attendance at the WCC General Assembly is by invitations, the event centers around worship and celebration, sharing and deliberation, some such sessions being open to public,

AND WHEREAS the WCC is aware of the views of the ZCC and the government on the issue of sexual orientation, a subject of much theological and ethical discussion and debate amongst the churches in many parts of the world, including some of WCC's own members,

AND WHEREAS the WCC itself has not entered into a position on the issue of sexual orientation as it is of the considered view that the issue calls for further careful thought and study by member constituents, the WCC nevertheless respects the right of churches and individuals to express their views on the issue.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS OUR COMMON UNDERSTANDING:

1. That the ZCC and the government will facilitate and ensure the entry into Zimbabwe, for the duration of the Assembly, of all persons accredited by the WCC as participants to the Eighth General Assembly including participants from countries with which Zimbabwe has not established diplomatic relations (e.g. Taiwan).

2. That the ZCC and the government ensure that adequate measures will be taken for protection of participants attending the Assembly. The WCC on its part will advise the participants not to indulge in any act that is in contravention of the laws of Zimbabwe.

3. That WCC will be responsible to maintain order and discipline within the space rented or put at its disposal for the purposes of the Assembly. The government will ensure that there will be no intervention by the local authorities unless explicitly requested by the WCC.

4. That the WCC will have the freedom to set the agenda and the programmes of the Assembly and to decide about the persons and the topics to be addressed; and the freedom to put on exhibition and/or display any literature, books or other materials including audio-visual and print pertaining to or related to matters under discussion at the Assembly; and the Assembly shall have freedom to express its views publicly on issues it deems fit.

5. That the government guarantees freedom of association and of

expression of opinion for all participants within the premises in which the Assembly is held.

6. That local, national and international journalists accredited by WCC for the Assembly will have the freedom to report and interpret the proceedings of the Assembly to the public at large. The participants at the Assembly will have the freedom to make statements to the press and grant interviews at their discretion.

7. That the WCC shall be permitted to import goods, services and literature related to the organization and running of the Assembly. The government agrees not to levy any import duty, taxes or charges on such importation.

8. The WCC shall open a foreign currency account with an authorized bank in Zimbabwe and transfer funds for running of the Assembly; and the government will facilitate the remittance and withdrawal of such funds as may be deemed necessary, from time to time, by the WCC. The financial transactions related to the Assembly shall be exempted from tax.

9. The government, the ZCC and the WCC will identify contact persons from their respective sides to facilitate and accelerate communication. In the event of a disagreement or dispute arising between or amongst the parties above named, every effort will be made to resolve it through negotiations without recourse to public or press statements.

The purpose of this MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING is to facilitate and assure the smooth and successful organization of the Eighth General Assembly, the desire and intent of the parties above named. The mutual good will manifested during the initial negotiations needs to be further strengthened to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding or embarrassment.

INVESTMENT POLICY GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES

For various non-financial reasons, the World Council of Churches has laid down policies over the years regarding some kinds of investment which are not acceptable. These General Guidelines are as follows:

INTRODUCTION

Through their involvement in economic life, churches and Christians may offer a significant witness in society to the values of justice, peace, reconciliation, healing and respect for God's creation. Therefore, investment policies of the World Council of Churches constitute an area in which Christian faith is lived out while providing a challenge and opportunity to give a credible ecumenical witness of what is believed to be God's purpose for society. In this, a certain degree of ambivalence cannot be avoided. Investment policies, therefore, require a constant effort of discerning our responsibilities as an ecumenical body in economic life.

POLICY OPTIONS

Regarding investment policies, several strategies can be followed:

1. Avoidance/divestment strategies: investments in enterprises which violate justice, peace and creation;
2. Alternative investment: investments in enterprises which, through their core activities, contribute to upholding justice, peace and the protection of the natural environment;
3. Advocacy: Investments in corporations can be used as a leverage to promote corporate responsibility regarding justice, peace and creation.

POLICY

With the exception of point 1. below, on which action was deferred until 1997, the Governing Bodies of the World Council of Churches have therefore agreed that:

1. The WCC shall not invest in enterprises which derive more than 10 per cent of their annual turnover from the following activities:

- nuclear weapons research and development, production and supply of key components for nuclear warheads, and/or the operation of nuclear power plants;
- research and development, production and supply of biological and chemical weapons;
- research and development, production and supply of armaments;
- production of liquor or tobacco;
- gambling.

The WCC shall also not invest in corporations which:

- apply discriminatory employment policies;
- de facto support violations of human rights;
- contribute directly to environmental destruction.

[Nestlé S.A. has been singled out as a company in which the WCC shall not invest because of the company's repeated breaches of the 1981 World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes].

2. The WCC has a preference for investing in corporations which, through their core activities, contribute to upholding justice and peace and the protection of the natural environment. In this respect, use can be made of the various alternative investment funds which exist.

At its meeting in Geneva, 14-22 September 1995, the WCC Central Committee resolved that, by the year 2000, 10 per cent of the General Funds available for investment and other appropriate funds be invested in the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS) and that, in 1996, 5 per cent of the General Fund balances available for investment and other appropriate funds be invested in the Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society (EDCS).

3. If it is found that some specific policies of a company in which the WCC holds stock runs counter to the convictions of the WCC, it may be decided that the WCC engages in dialogue with that company in an effort to change the corporation's policy. Such dialogue could take different forms and may include shareholder action. In case such action fails to produce the desired changes in corporate behaviour, the WCC may decide to divest its stock in that company.

4. The Council will refer its investment portfolios to an independent, external review to ensure compliance with its ethical policies.

5. If queries arise on the interpretation of these guidelines, they should be referred to the Finance Committee through the Assistant General Secretary for Finance and Administration.

Budget for 1997 Summary

	Original Budget CHF 000s	CHF 000s	Proposed Budget CHF 000s	CHF 000s
Anticipated Undesignated income		(6,232)		(6,232)
Undesignated income				
Relationships & Communications	4,258		4,036	
Bossey	487		250	
Unit 1	2,026		1,946	
		6,771		6,232
Forecast deficit on Undesignated income		539		0
Shared costs (included as Gen Sec)		474		0
Amortisation of restructuring costs		235		235
Total "Central Deficit"		1,248		235
Unit General Deficits				
Unit 2	77		0	
Unit 3	22		0	
Unit 4	0		0	
		99		0
Total anticipated deficit - General funds		1,347		235

The proposed budget includes the savings recommended by the Finance Strategy Working Group. This summary does not agree to the supporting budgets on pages 2 to 4 in respect of the proposed budget.

Amortisation of restructuring costs:

The total cost of the restructuring programme is currently CHF 1.6 million for changes agreed to July 1996. Grants totalling CHF 425,000 have been pledged and the balance is to be amortised over five years.

Budget for the year to 31 December 1997

TOTAL GENERAL

	GENERAL SECRETARIAT				UNITS		TOTAL GENERAL
	General Secretariat	Comms & Rels	Management & Finance	Bossey	Total	Total	
Income							
Undesignated Income	0	4,258	0	487	4,746	2,026	6,772
Unit General Income	476	295	65	700	1,536	17,696	19,232
Activity Income	62	0	0	475	537	0	537
Investment Income	0	0	0	90	90	0	90
Seconded Staff	0	0	0	0	0	300	300
Production Income	0	1,014	1,884	1,048	3,946	0	3,946
Income - Internal	0	610	2,687	0	3,297	0	3,297
Income - Shared	2,432	1,319	6,195	0	9,947	0	9,947
Miscellaneous Income	15	57	103	0	175	930	1,105
Total Income	2,985	7,553	10,934	2,800	24,274	20,952	45,226
Expenses							
Salaries and related charges	2,061	3,644	5,352	1,605	12,662	12,896	25,558
Professional Services	2	429	972	475	1,878	50	1,928
Grants	278	546	137	0	961	0	961
Governing Bodies	880	0	0	0	880	535	1,415
Meetings and Consultations	125	307	0	20	452	691	1,143
Staff travel and hospitality	139	171	78	21	409	592	1,001
PTT Charges	33	478	1,899	0	2,410	446	2,856
Office expenses	72	321	1,423	431	2,247	335	2,582
Publications	20	765	64	0	849	275	1,124
Financial expenses	12	20	1,291	45	1,368	0	1,368
Total Expenses	3,622	6,681	11,216	2,597	24,116	15,820	39,936

Shared Costs									
Block Grant	0	0	0	0	0	2,432	2,432		2,432
Turnover	0	132	46	178	1,732	1,732		1,910	
FTEs	70	560	172	802	2,769	2,769		3,571	
Rooms	32	375	0	407	1,281	1,281		1,688	
Total Shared Costs	102	1,067	218	1,387	8,214	8,214		9,601	
Total Expenses	3,724	7,748	2,815	25,503	24,034	24,034		49,537	
Excess of income over expenses	(739)	(195)	(15)	(1,229)	(3,082)	(3,082)		(4,311)	
Transfers									
Transfers in	421	161	0	805	2,984	2,984		3,789	197
Transfers out	(50)	0	0	(50)	0	0		(50)	
Net Transfers	371	161	0	755	2,984	2,984		3,739	
Excess of income over expenses after transfers	(368)	(34)	(15)	(474)	(99)	(99)		(572)	
Undesignated income									
Income		6,232							
Relationships & Communications		(4,258)							
Bossey		(487)							
Unit 1		(2,026)							
UDI deficit		<u>(539)</u>							

Exchange rates:	
USD	1.20
DEM	0.82
SEK	0.18

Budget for the year to 31 December 1997

ACTIVITIES

Income

Undesignated Income	0	0	0	0	0
Unit General Income	0	0	0	0	0
Activity Income	1,550	2,175	6,300	26,206	36,231
Investment Income	0	0	0	0	0
Seconded Staff	0	0	0	0	0
Production Income	0	0	0	0	0
Income - Internal	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	0	0
Total Income	1,550	2,175	6,300	26,206	36,231

198

Expenses

Salaries and related charges	0	0	0	200	200
Professional Services	0	0	0	0	0
Grants	1,550	1,331	6,279	28,000	37,160
Governing Bodies	0	0	0	0	0
Meetings and Consultations	0	924	0	1,700	2,624
Staff travel and hospitality	0	12	0	200	212
PTT Charges	0	70	0	90	160
Office expenses	0	21	0	725	746
Publications	0	226	0	50	276
Financial expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses	1,550	2,583	6,279	30,965	41,378

Shared Costs					
Block Grant	0	0	0	0	0
Turnover	0	0	0	0	0
FTEs	0	0	0	230	230
Rooms	0	0	0	113	113
Total Shared Costs	0	0	0	343	343
Total Expenses	1,550	2,583	6,279	31,308	41,721
Excess of income over expenses	0	(408)	21	(5,102)	(5,490)
Transfers					
Transfers in	0	808	479	0	1,287
Transfers out	0	(400)	(500)	(1,121)	(2,021)
Net Transfers	0	408	(21)	(1,121)	(734)
Budgeted decrease in fund balances	0	0	0	(6,223)	(6,224)
Fund balances at 1 January 1997 (budgeted)	3,086	2,023	2,050	12,000	19,159
Fund balances at 31 December 1997 (budgeted)	3,086	2,023	2,050	5,777	12,935

Budget for the year to 31 December 1997

UNIT GENERAL

	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	Total
Income					
Undesignated Income	2,026	0	0	0	2,026
Unit General Income	1,130	4,725	4,965	6,876	17,696
Activity Income	0	0	0	0	0
Investment Income	0	0	0	0	0
Seconded Staff	0	0	300	0	300
Production Income	0	0	0	0	0
Income - Internal	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Income	0	0	0	930	930
Total Income	3,156	4,725	5,265	7,806	20,952
					200
Expenses					
Salaries and related charges	1,916	2,783	3,392	4,805	12,896
Professional Services	0	0	0	50	50
Grants	0	0	0	0	0
Governing Bodies	270	40	100	125	535
Meetings and Consultations	164	411	50	66	691
Staff travel and hospitality	104	195	50	243	592
PTT Charges	60	82	100	204	446
Office expenses	40	60	50	185	335
Publications	41	121	50	63	275
Financial expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenses	2,595	3,692	3,792	5,741	15,820

Shared Costs						
Block Grant	608	608	608	608	2,432	
Turnover	93	154	246	1,239	1,732	
FTEs	395	579	766	1,029	2,769	
Rooms	214	290	375	402	1,281	
Total Shared Costs	1,310	1,631	1,995	3,278	8,214	
Total Expenses	3,905	5,323	5,787	9,019	24,034	
Excess of income over expenses	(749)	(598)	(522)	(1,213)	(3,082)	
Transfers						
Transfers in	750	521	500	1,213	2,984	
Transfers out	0	0	0	0	0	
Net Transfers	750	521	500	1,213	2,984	
Excess of income over expenses after transfers	0	(77)	(22)	0	(99)	

Eighth Assembly Budget - Fifth Draft

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY FIFTH DRAFT BUDGET - SUMMARY

REVISION JULY 1996

(All figures are in Swiss francs)

	Notes	Budget 1998	Actual 1991
EXPENDITURE	1		
1. ASSEMBLY ADMINISTRATION & OFFICE		1,775,575	1,564,377
2. ASSEMBLY PLANNING & WORSHIP - Committees, worship, expenses		610,878	389,346
3. PRE-ASSEMBLY PROGRAMMES - Team visits, prep. meetings	8	500,000	163,309
4. LOCAL ASSEMBLY COSTS			3,207,396
4.1 Zimbabwe local offices, admin. net	2	500,000	
4.2 On site facilities & expenses	6	900,000	
4.3 Programme costs	7	100,000	
5. COMMUNICATIONS	3		
5.1 Press & media		702,500	1,051,420
5.2/3 Publications, bookshop		795,000	634,371
5.4 Audio/Visual		437,500	
5.5 Telecommunication		100,000	
5.6 50th Anniversary		250,000	
5.7 Language Service - Translation, interpretation		950,000	935,685
8. SUBSIDIES PARTICIPANTS - Delegates, advisers, guests	4	2,080,000	1,124,489
9. STAFF & CO-OPTED STAFF	5	477,750	214,577
10. STEWARDS		588,000	324,914
		10,767,203	
		232,797	
	9	11,000,000	9,609,884
TOTAL EXPENSES			
15. CONTINGENCIES (approx 2.16% expenditure)			
TOTAL EXPENDITURE BUDGET			

INCOME				
DELEGATES REGISTRATION FEES	10	700,000		781,405
OTHER FEES - Visitors, etc.	10	600,000		661,960
CONTRIBUTIONS MEMBER CHURCHES				6,414,626
CONTRIBUTION WCC GENERAL FUNDS - up to 1995		1,700,000		1,713,663
INVESTMENT INCOME, EXCHANGE	11			895,289
			3,000,000	
TOTAL REQUIREMENT MEMBER CHURCHES	12		8,000,000	
BALANCE SURPLUS	13			10,466,943
				857,059

Notes:General - the basis has been the 7th Assembly actual costs. Many expenses depend on decisions yet to be taken and information still to be obtained. Income and expenses relating to "self payers" are not included.

1. Rates of exchange are taken at CHF 1.25 = US\$, ZIM \$ = CHF 8.8. The Assembly account is maintained in US dollars.
2. At Canberra all local costs were covered by local income. This is not possible in Zimbabwe and a contribution of CHF 500,000 will be made from the Assembly Fund. It is hoped local fundraising will cover the balance.
3. There is unlikely to be a large local contribution, as there was at Canberra.
4. This is based on past numbers and detailed information is awaited.
5. Based on 90 Executive staff, 90 administrative staff and 28 co-opted staff. Executive staff travel is charged to Unit travel budgets (as previously).
6. Based on data from the University and adjusted for inflation. At Canberra many things were charged to to this budget which will be charged in detail to other budget heads this time.
7. Programmes are not yet planned in any detail, so this is a notional figure.
8. No firm details have been agreed on pre-Assembly activities, so these are notional figures.
9. A contingencies allowance of 2.16% of expenditure is provided. This in much reduced from the 10% previously included.
10. The level of registration fees is based on those charged at Canberra (CHF 250, US\$ 200).
11. There were substantial interest and exchange gains at Canberra. It is impossible to estimate these for 1998.
12. This is to make the 1998 Assembly budget self-balancing.
13. It is always hoped that there will be a balance to carry forward to the following Assembly to assist with initial expenses.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST *

Report of the Moderator (5.3)

Report of the General Secretary (5.4)

Activities Report of Unit I: Unity and Renewal (1.1)

Activities Report of Unit II: Churches in Mission: Health, Education, Witness (2.1)

Full report of the Study on HIV/AIDS (booklet)

Activities Report of Unit III: Justice, Peace and Creation (3.1)

Report of the Consultation on The Programme to Overcome Violence,
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 1996 (3.2.1)

The Study Process on Ecclesiology and Ethics, 1992-1996 (C.3)

Activities Report of Unit IV: Sharing and Service (4.1)

Strategy for Jubilee - A Four Year Plan: 1995-1998

Activities report: General Secretariat: Offices on Relationships and Communication, Management and Finance (5.1)

Programme Coordination Report (5.2)

The WCC and Celebrations to mark the Year 2000

Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC - interim report (6.1)

Towards a Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC - A Working Draft for a Policy Statement (revised text, November 1996)

International Affairs: Statements and Messages by the General Secretary, October 1995 - August 1996 (8.2.1)

Report of the Finance Committee (7.1)

Financial Report 1995 - World Council of Churches

Yearbook 1996 - World Council of Churches

* *Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of the document; most are available in English, French, German and Spanish.*

